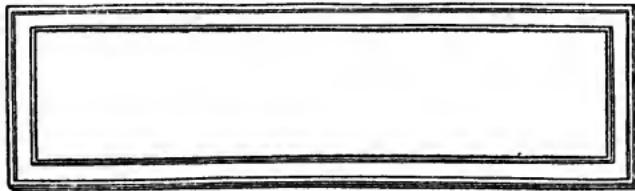
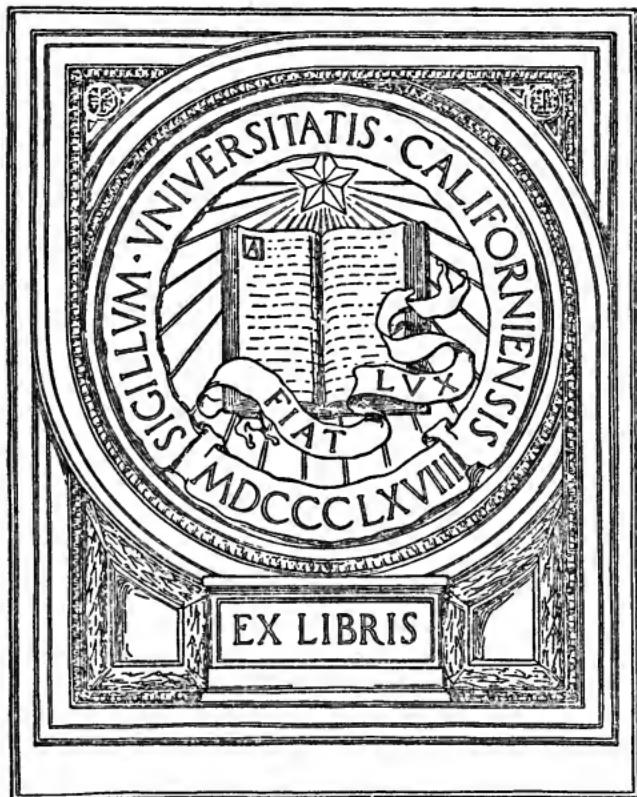
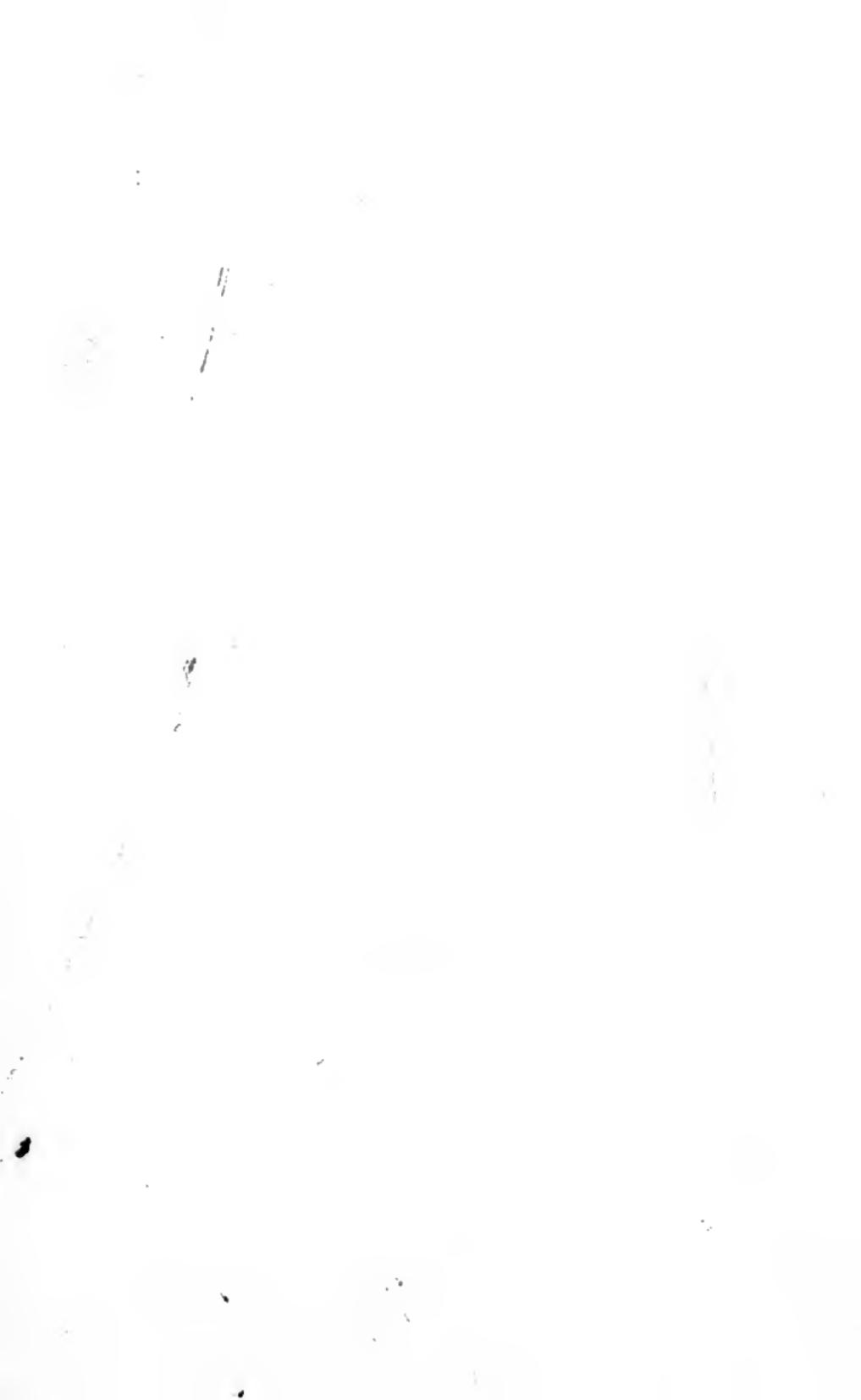


HOW TYSON CAME HOME

WILLIAM H. RIDEING





How Tyson Came Home

By the Same Author

A-Saddle in the Wild West

Thackeray's London

A Little Upstart

The Captured Cunarder

etc. etc. etc.

HOW TYSON CAME HOME

*A Story of England
and America by*

WILLIAM H. RIDEING

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How Tyson Came Home

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Chapter I. *The Stranger who Lost his Way* : : : : : : :

TYSON was going home. Not until he had reached middle-age, as he regarded that variable period—he was thirty—had the chance come to him. Years earlier he had landed in the States, a boy, friendless and penniless, but hopeful, with a head full of dreams, and plenty of room in a small old-fashioned carpet-bag for all his material belongings. He could darn his own socks in those days, and apply, not without skill, a patch, when needed, to the rough tweeds that were consecrated to “Sunday bests” and holidays, or to the corduroys and assorted things that served him for week-days.

Now he was going home, and the smile which flickered across his face had its source in a gratified though almost incredulous recognition of the amazing change that had taken place in his fortunes since that far-off time when, disembarking from the steamer in New York, he had made his way to Chicago.

It all came back to him and he chuckled to himself as he recalled some of the incidents of that first journey through what to him were the wilds; even such trifles as the trepidation with which he discovered that breakfast, dinner, or supper at the railway eating-houses cost a dollar, and how, after once having unwittingly been led into an extravagance so far beyond his means, he had stuffed his carpet-bag with apples

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and dough-nuts, and thereafter had supplied his ravenous boyish appetite with nothing more substantial. He recalled also how he had travelled over part of the route on the wrong train, and how the pompous, bullying, puffed-up conductor had threatened to put him off, until some of the passengers had come to his defence and rescue, and that it was not his own stupidity after all, but all the fault of the railway people of Erie. Then he was reminded of that friendly Californian who was so kind to him, giving him fruit, lending him papers, explaining things to him, and trying to make him comfortable on the narrow seat which they shared on the long and dusty journey—the shaggy, toil-worn, ponderous man who, unlike the other passengers, found nothing laughable in the surmises and questions and blunders of this poor little new-comer in a strange land.

“I’d like to get hold of that old cuss,” thought Tyson; “he was a white man. Why, in the name of God, are n’t people kinder to boys? Nobody’s so grateful as a boy you’ve been kind to; he’s just as grateful as a dog.”

Tyson chuckled again. He was in the real West now, but he was going home. The thought seemed to flow through him like a strain of music, to weave itself into a rapturous maze, losing itself momentarily in intricate but ever-pleasing byways, but always coming back in a dancing measure to reiterate itself in its initial charm.

Before his eyes now were the grey and yellow plains, buttressed by flat-topped treeless bluffs, with sheer escarpments—the *mesas* of the southwest, painted by Nature’s hand with ribbons of violet, crimson and yellow. Carved and detached by

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erosion, a pinnacle stood out here and there on the promontories like a campanile, or the tower of a mosque. All the colour was oriental, and with the slant of the sun it was deepening and rivalling the glory of the sky. It was an enchanted land he gazed upon, glowing and translucent like the colours in the spectra of the stars.

His legs hung over a wall of sun-dried brick or adobe, and around him and above him rose the fortress-like mass of the Indian pueblo, the exterior walls slit with occasional unglazed peep-holes, but without other apertures. The great ladders for exit and entrance bristled against and criss-crossed the tiers of archaic dwellings. On the flat roofs a few Indian women in loose striped gowns were painting basins, ewers and pots of native pottery. Down by the river the men and boys, dressed in white cotton tunics and drawers, and with scarfs knotted across their brows, were tilling the fields where later in the season there would be crops of wheat, maize and fruit.

Five miles away a group of buildings strangely out of keeping with their surroundings—the derricks of a mine and the sheds of an ore-mill, and several engine houses—could be discovered and identified by one who knew that they were there, though a stranger not expecting them would have confused them with other fantastic features of the weird landscape.

Over there was the “Queen of Sheba,” where Tyson lived, and where he had made his pile—Tyson and the Senator, and a few of their friends. There was not any other such mine as the “Queen” in all that region.

Farther to the southeast Manaña Peak jutted out

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of the desert like a pinnacle of amethyst in a still black pool spotted with islets of green. Manaña was an extinct volcano, and the Stygian lake around it was a flood of crusted lava that some centuries earlier had rolled down from its apex.

But though his eyes were fixed upon them, Tyson was not taking note of what to him were common-places, and the dreamy smile in his face came from an inner vision of things far away—of hawthorn hedges and thatched cottages; of cool and silent streams bordered by willows; of wide-spreading beeches; of poppies in the wheat; of roses and honeysuckle mantling porches and gables; of golden showers of laburnum mixing with white and red May blossoms, of a delectable land of silvery clouds and soft voices and gentle manners—a land whose every squire was a *Sir Roger de Coverley*, every vicar a *Dr. Primrose*, and every mansion a Bracebridge Hall. Ah! This Arcadia, this Paradise, this England, what fragrance and music the vision of it brought him!

As he sat there Manaña lost its transparency and grew opaque and darkly purple and the light faded from crimson to orange and olive in the west.

It was time to return to Sheba, and Tyson went down the ladder, looking, as he passed, into the chamber of the pueblo where the old governor, huddled over a small fire, puffed slowly at his corn-husk cigarette.

“So you leave Laguna soon, little brother?” asked the old Indian.

“Very soon.”

“You go to Chicago, little brother?”

“No.”

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“Was—in—tona ?”

“Farther than Washington, padre,—over the great waters—over the waters that are salt and deep, the waters that nurse the sun when it is born, and bury it when it dies.”

“And she goes with you on your long journey to see the sun where it is born ?”

Tyson paused before replying to this question, which took him by surprise, and went further than he cared for.

“No,” he said, and the “no” was quite decisive. “I go alone.”

He sprang into his high-peaked Mexican saddle and trotted off along the trail to Sheba. So blue was the night that it was like a bowl of lapis lazuli with stars of gold and silver inlaid upon it. The stars were near and bright and Tyson hummed—

“The oak and the ash and the bonnie ivy tree,
They flourish at home in my ain countree.”

Part of his way was across the sandy plain and through the thicket of gnarled and knotted sage-brush which pricked the air with its acrid pungence. Then as he skirted the spurs of Manaña the path led through stunted pines and mesquit, and there were outcroppings of the lava which made many curves necessary. He walked his horse here, and had to be cautious.

Voices ahead then caught his ear, sounding like pebbles dropped into a pool, and he pulled up abruptly to listen. They were not the voices of Indians, not the voices of miners or ranchmen, not voices of any kind that could be heard without surprise on the

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trail at this hour of the night. He was sure of that. One was a woman's in some distress and confusion, the other a man's weak, faint and apologetic.

Advancing a few paces, Tyson's quick ear soon identified the woman's, but the man's remained strange to him.

"Nona, is that you?" he cried.

"Sounds like me, does n't it?"

"What on earth are you doing here, Nona?"

"Come on and see, instead of standing there. Get off, and come and help me get him home."

"Get him home? Who is it?"

"Just a man I guess."

"A very poor specimen, I'm afraid," the stranger interposed feebly.

"Just my luck with men," said Nona, and she laughed again.

Tyson could now dimly see the stranger, propped against a boulder, with Nona bending over him. She had dismounted from her horse and slung the reins over her elbow.

"Missed the trail and got lost on the lava," she explained. "I thought it was good-by, John, when I found him. Jim, do n't stand there like a fool, and do n't say another word to me about Amazons. I'm not in it. I've got to go into training. I've been trying to boost him into my saddle for the last half-hour, and could n't for the life of me. Guess he's pretty bad. Can you see him? He's a tenderfoot, sure."

"I lost my horse two days ago," the stranger explained. "His hoofs were worn to the bone. I fancy I must have dropped just where I am now. A close call is the word, is n't it? I am sorry to give you

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so much trouble, really—forgive me, won't you? Surely I'm not so much used up as this young lady seems to think. I can stand, and—and—walk to some place of shelter. Really I am ashamed of myself."

The stranger lifted himself by his elbows and tottered to his feet, but would have fallen had not Tyson caught him. His voice was not the voice Tyson had expected; it sounded like an echo of his dream.

"English?" he inquired.

"Yes, English."

Tyson lifted him up and seated him in his own saddle and started him on the trail towards Sheba, following afoot by the side of the girl, who had remounted.

It was not quite dark, and though they were invisible to the stranger, Nona and Tyson could vaguely discern each other.

"Is there a tavern at the mines?" the stranger asked wearily.

"A kind of tavern, but I don't recommend it," Tyson answered. "We have n't got any 'Roses and Crowns' or 'Barley Mows,' or 'Wheatsheaf' out here, you know. But the fellow that keeps this place is an Englishman, and he gives it a name. He calls it 'The Square Meal.'"

"'The Square Meal' will do for me. That's an excellent name. I fancy you have been in England from your reference to the inns?"

"Oh yes, I've been there," said Tyson, with unction and a conscious inflation, as though confessing to an edifying and notable distinction.

"Oh yes, he's been in England," Nona interposed,

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mimicking Tyson's voice and emphasising a grimace with a pinch of his arm.

"And what part might you come from?" Tyson continued.

"England is such a little place. To say England, is n't that enough?"

"That's a large order. What does it mean?"

Tyson did not want trifling or evasion.

"A vagabond," murmured the stranger.

"Well, I'm a Lancashire man myself," Tyson declared, and thereupon Nona murmured secretly, "God save the Queen!"

"Ah, I thought I recognized the Lancashire burr. I like it; it has a good honest sound. But I am not answering your question. I too am a Lancashire man by birth. You have been to the Lakes?"

"Long ago."

"You remember Langdale Hall?"

"Why, I've *been* there! When I was a little lad I went there on a school treat—to Lord Langdale's place. And a fine place it is, and no mistake! So you live near Langdale, do you? It's a grand neighbourhood."

"Not *near* Langdale. *At* Langdale."

"At the Hall?"

"Yes."

"Well, well!"

Tyson's imagination was stirred, and he nudged Nona. The manner of the stranger was very gentle, his voice musical. What could he be doing at Langdale Hall? He could not be a servant. He was a gentleman, plainly—a member of the family, perhaps, or, it might be, Lord Langdale's secretary. Lords were screened divinities to Tyson and apart from

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common mortals, but the only specimen he could remember having seen had been at a bazaar for a church mission in a provincial town, when even the mayor and the mayoress and all the local bigwigs had bowed to it while the crowd gaped and cheered.

Tyson's interest grew. Here was a new acquaintance to whom nobility was no mystery, though it was not to be thought that in its own environment it was less sacred, or less esoteric, or less aloof than he conceived it to be from what he had read of it and seen of it at the bazaar.

"You'll know Lord Langdale, then, if you live at the Hall?" he inquired.

"Lord Langdale is my brother. My name is Julian Glynne."

Tyson nudged Nona again, and whispered, "What do you think of that?"

And then summoning to his memory the many gables of Langdale Hall standing out against the seal-brown crags,—the bracken, the furze and the ash-trees and birches of the hills that roll down to Windermere,—Tyson thought some formality would be appropriate.

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Glynne," he said, and turning to Nona, "Miss Plant, allow me to introduce Mr. Glynne. My name's Tyson—James Tyson."

They caught a little laugh from their new acquaintance as Nona was nodding her head ceremoniously.

"Are you a Count?" she asked.

"There are no Counts in England, Nona," Tyson protested, in a whisper.

"Well, Earl then. When I was at school at 'Frisco one of the girls ran away with a Count, and he was no good."

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“Not even ‘Earl,’ Miss Plant,” said Glynne. “I’ve not a title of any kind, not a shred of distinction.”

“Not even an ‘honourable’? Father’s an ‘honourable.’”

“Your father ranks higher than I do.”

“You’re an aristocrat, anyway.”

“By birth, perhaps, but what one is by birth is often just that which one would rather not be. By birth! Ah, birth is the source of many penalties of life. To say that a man is this or that by birth is to confess to his misfortune. I am a nobody, Miss Plant. But I am tiring you with all this talk.”

“Not a bit of it, but you are tiring yourself, old man,” said Tyson, surprising himself with his own familiarity.

“He’s all right,” he whispered reassuringly to Nona. “You do n’t expect him to blow about himself and his family, do you? That is n’t their way.”

The three plodded on in silence. Neither of the men had fully seen the other, and they had been talking with a wall of darkness between them, which surmise and conjecture had not yet scaled. There had been enough twilight for Nona to see that Glynne was young and for him to discover in her some signs of beauty, but the impression on both sides was indistinct.

Presently the trail emerged on the slope of a hill, and Sheba twinkled before them, while far off in the other direction a pale lamp or two gleamed like timid eyes from the ancient pueblo.

Nona and Tyson whispered together.

“Would the Senator mind?”

“Well, Jim, I thought you knew father well enough not to ask that.”

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“But you?”

“I guess I’m a white man,” she declared, and then addressing Glynne, “Here we are. Jim will help you out of your saddle, and I’ll just run in and fix things for you.”

“Senator Plant’s house,” Tyson explained. “This is to be your inn. Nona—Miss Plant—insists on it. Let’s give it a name, eh? like old England. What do you say? ‘The Horn of Plenty,’ or ‘The Wheel of Fortune?’ Both are good old-fashioned names, anyway; either will fit.”

“If it must have a name,” said Julian, with that ever-ready laugh of his, though now it was nearly inaudible, “let us call it after that nice girl, ‘The Angel.’”

He had hardly spoken when he slipped from his saddle in a swoon, and Tyson called for help to carry him into the house.

The house was new and luxurious, blending some of the features of a Mexican mission with those of the architecture known as “Colonial.” The entrance hall made a spacious sitting-room, modern in all its appurtenances. Electric lamps starred its canary walls and white woodwork, and a fire of logs blazed and crackled cheerfully in a huge hooded fire-place.

Here Nona and Tyson met again in half an hour, she running up to him and patting his cheeks, a demonstration to which he yielded without surprise and without elation.

There was a whimsical kindly smile in his honest face, and a twinkle in his blue-grey eyes. Better-looking men might have been less impassive than this had it been their privilege to look through Nona’s palms down the white rounded arm to her generous figure, supple as a young panther’s, and into her fair

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oval face, with its full lips and its brown eyes, which, floating under long silky lashes, expressed in changeful glances both roguery and demureness, mischief and seriousness. She was as brown as a gypsy, but her complexion was flawless and rosy. The effect of her presence was of amiability and exuberant youthfulness, restrained only in case of the imperative by unwelcome and tardy gravity.

She sighed and sat down in an arm-chair at one side of the fire-place, smoothing the rustling silk gown she now wore, and the flames of the pine logs turned into gold all the loose strands of her voluminous bronze hair as it rolled up from her forehead like a helmet.

“How is he?” she asked.

“Played out; that’s all. He’ll be all right in a day or two.”

“Jim, do you think he’s a fake?”

Tyson scowled. “I wish you would n’t give us slang all the time, Nona.”

“Do n’t you use slang, too?”

“That is n’t it. You know that well enough.”

“You never objected before. What’s the matter with you? What’s the matter with slang anyway? Have n’t you said it was a sort of shorthand of speech?”

They had “matched” slang and competed with each other in slang so often that his protest puzzled her.

“Ah, I see now,” she exclaimed, with knitted brows; “it’s that Englishman you’re thinking of. Your lord! I’m not good enough for him! Perhaps you are ashamed of me.”

Tyson was a little ashamed of himself, for he had

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detected himself surmising with some dubiety how good an impression his old friend would make on his new one. He was not going to let her think he could be guilty of apostasy, however.

“How unfair you are, Nona!” he complained. “Ashamed of you! How can you say a thing like that!”

Her anger passed, and left her thoughtful and penitent. “I understand what you mean, Jim: it is n’t ladylike. I know I’m a tom-boy and a hoyden, but what chances have I had out here at the mines, and only a visit to Chicago or Denver now and then? Wait until I get to Washington. Then you’ll see how I’ll pick up things. I’ve *got* to behave myself, that’s a fact; and when you get back from England I’ll be so elegant you wont know me.”

“I do n’t want you to change, Nona, only—”

“Yes. I wonder what he did think of me. I suppose that when I found him I ought to have just left him where he was, and just told them here, Chidsey or John, that somebody was lying out there in the dark. That would have been proper. But he was so pale I thought he was dying, and I could n’t leave a fellow like that. You would n’t, would you? Has the poor cuss got everything he wants?”

“Everything. Nona, look here; you’re a brick.”

“I’m dead tired, Jim; that’s all,” she sighed.

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Chapter II. An Exchange of Confidences : : : : : :

SEVERAL days later when Julian Glynne arose to dress he had recovered from his exhaustion, though he still limped, and when he looked out of his chamber windows, it was on surroundings that had grown in a measure familiar to him through the glimpses he had taken of them in the restlessness of his confinement.

His room was like that of any modern American country house, cool, airy, spacious and tasteful, with creamy white woodwork, oak flooring, oriental rugs, yellow chrysanthemums in chintz on the walls, chairs and sofas, and a generous fire-place set in a mantel of fluted pillars and embossed urns and wreaths.

Out of doors, however, the disordered colour of the phenomenal landscape made all this taste and luxury seem illusory and incredible. The suggestion was of paint—of a landscape deluged with paint in strange combinations, with yellow ochre dominant. The soil of the levels and the rocks of the *mesas* alike looked like pigments—yellow pigments and red pig-

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ments, streaked with the olive of the dwarf pines and cedars, and the grey of the misty little sage brush. Even the sky was like a hard lacquered surface of hyacinthine blue, and neither haze nor cloud floated across it to mitigate the vitreous glare.

Tyson had been devoted to the invalid, and in constant attendance upon him, seeing after his wants with eager solicitude, and talking with him much of the time.

Never before had Tyson known so fascinating a person, and the attraction seemed to be mutual. The intimacy retraced in its fervour and loquacity many vanquished years and seemed to kindle in his newly found friend a warmth responsive to his own, and apparently not less ardent.

It was a long story Glynne told of circumstances which had led to his misadventure on the lava beds under Manaña.

He propped himself up with cushions in a little balconied window, and there stretched himself in Tyson's dressing-gown and smoked Tyson's cigarettes. Tyson looked at him with admiration, but without any such scrupulous analysis of detail as a feminine observer would have used to confirm a general impression.

All that Tyson catalogued from his scrutiny was as laconic as a way-bill, or the report of an orderly in a public institution.

Glynne was young and good-looking and a good fellow ; that was all, and if Tyson had been asked for further particulars, "unmistakably a gentleman" would have seemed to him to complete the picture and to suffice for any reasonable curiosity.

Glynne's eyes were blue—as blue as the blue of

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the hyacinthine sky—but Tyson did not know it. Glynne's hair was almost yellow, close and wavy—of the kind that seems to never grow too long—but it might have been sparse, or anything but red or white, for all that Tyson observed. Glynne's complexion was fair and florid, and his features were regular, though his mouth was too much like a woman's; but Tyson on oath could not have described them.

Not that Tyson was unobservant, or lacking in perspicuity, in other directions, but he had the average man's incapacity for that swift and comprehensive panorama of the person in which women are adepts.

Briefly, Glynne was of the crisp military English type, tall, lithe, supple, and spare in body. His flexible grace and easy laugh seemed to lubricate every halting circumstance and embarrassing moment. Tyson himself was a similar figure, slender but muscular, though without any of the cultivated elegance of manner and pliant grace which came into play in all his companion's gestures and movements.

“You must understand,” said Glynne, “that I am as poor as a church mouse. No, not relatively, but actually poor.”

“The brother of Lord Langdale?”

“Yes, and Lord Langdale is poor too.—Ah! how I hate poverty. I know all the ingredients of that stew—fear, anxiety, deceit—an interrogation point before and behind every pleasure!”

“And how many thousands a year do you call poverty?” Tyson asked, wrinkling his face.

“Not thousands at all. A very few hundreds, and no certainty as to those.”

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“That’s not much, to be sure, for a man in society, as you’ve got to be, of course,” Tyson admitted. “But you must have expectations?”

“No Jew has ever been sanguine about them. I am Lord Langdale’s only brother, and his heir, but he is just five years older than I am, and is about to be married. I shall inevitably disappear in a nephew whose small fat hands will pluck all my modest expectations to pieces and scatter them to the winds.

“Ah, my dear fellow,” Glynne sighed, “you must let me have my little fling at Poverty—the haridan, the long-fingered, pinching witch. She is the mother of all evil.”

“I guess you’re right about that,” said Tyson. “But what brought you here?”

Glynne reflected before he replied. “I met a man from this very neighbourhood in the city—in London. He had a claim to a mine out here, and as he was hard up he sold it to me at, as he said, a great bargain. I did n’t quite believe in him, but I like dreams and adventures.”

Tyson shook his head in the parental way in which reproof and pity mingle.

“Stuck you, did he?”

“Apparently.”

“His name was Pewster?” guessed Tyson.

“Yes, that’s it. I thought you might know him.”

“Oh, yes, I know Pewster—we all know Pewster,” Tyson drawled. “Look here!”

He led Glynne to another window, and both of them blinked in the glare of the view. “You see those shafts over there, just under the saddle of the hill? That’s the mine that Pewster claims. He’d been working on the same clue that I had—that’s

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true enough—but I got here before him. He 's been bothering us ever since. When did you see him last ? ”

“ I 've not seen him for years. I 've been away in Egypt and India with my regiment, you know.”

“ In the army, eh ? ”

“ I was. I 'm out of it now.”

“ You 've heard of him, of course ? ” Tyson asked, coming back to Pewster.

“ No.”

“ Well, I understand he 's wearing purple and fine linen now. He 's been successful in some schemes, and Mike Dougherty 's got hold of him. When he left this place he was wearing tar and feathers. He was everything that 's bad. The boys wanted to lynch him, but I got them to let the low-down cuss off with his life. I do n't know why I did that either. It 's no good being soft-hearted with reptiles. He 's behind Dougherty in all the litigation we 're having now.”

They smoked in silence for a few minutes, and then Tyson asked, “ Where are your papers—those he sold you ? ”

“ They were in one of my saddle-bags when I lost my horse.”

“ Well, they were n 't worth much any way,” said Tyson, blowing a cloud and watching it float upward.

“ Exactly what I suspected,” murmured Glynne, with easy resignation. “ And now some more about yourself. Your story—your own story—interests me. What adventures you must have had ! ”

“ Oh, I do n't know,” Tyson replied awkwardly. “ I 've been lucky, that 's all. I left England when I was fourteen years old to seek my fortune, and I

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had n't any doubt that there was a fortune somewhere for me. Father dead, mother dead—one of those families that drop out and disappear all of a sudden, you know. I suppose I had some relations who might have looked out for me, but they did n't, and they did n't even do it for the only other child of my parents, a little girl, who was taken to the—to an institution. I 've been trying to find that child for years, but have n't been able to do it. I was always fond of her; such a pretty and intelligent little thing, she was, and she had been left to me by my mother, who said with her last breath, 'Look out for your sister, Jim.' My father?—no matter, but drink was at the bottom of it.

"The matron of the institution never paid any attention to my letters, and though I have since employed some lawyers to look into the matter, they have not been able—so they say—to get any satisfactory information. Now I am going to England myself, and I intend to find her, and if I find her there'll be nothing too good for her. Sometimes I have convictions that I can't account for—intuitions, if you prefer—and they seldom fail me."

"Possibly I might be of some service," Glynne suggested.

Tyson looked over to him eagerly. "I suppose there are 'pulls' over there as well as here."

"My dear boy, you know as well as I do that we have 'pulls' in England, though we do n't call them by that name. But tell me more, won't you? You won't think me indelicate in pressing you?"

"Well," Tyson went on, "I came to America, and did anything that came to hand—anything! I ped-

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dled chromos from door to door ; worked in a second-hand bookstore (*that* I liked, for I 've always been fond of books) ; made abstracts of deeds and mortgages for a lawyer, or a conveyancer, as you 'd call him ; put on the uniform of a district messenger ; shifted about from town to town."

He laughed in his peculiar way. His voice was deep and slow, and his laugh rumbled up like a reverberation from a cellar.

"Then I came out West. Another job turned up in the office of a mining engineer, and there I stuck for two years. That was the making of me. I worked from eight to six at the office, attended a technical school in the evening, and went on with my studies until I usually fell asleep in my clothes somewhere about dawn. Somehow I saved three or four hundred dollars, and I started out as a prospector in this country. It 's too long a story how I first heard of the lost mine—we 'll put it off till another time—but with a small pack and a pick-axe on a *burro*—a donkey—a frying-pan, a bit of salt pork and a bag of flour, I camped out until I did find it. And then I went to sleep, all played out.

"You see that clump of mesquit bushes through the window ?" he continued pointing. "There 's a spring there, and a creek. That 's the place."

"That 's where I started from before I lost myself on the lava," said Glynne.

"Yes, it 's easy to miss the trail there," Tyson agreed. "However, I did n't miss it, and I went to sleep, and slept long into the next morning. I 'd been dreaming about my sister, and when I woke up I thought I saw her and that I was still dreaming. There was a little girl, just about her age, feeding

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the *burro*, which I had hobbled, and then rubbing his nose with her cheek. It was Nona ; and then her father came up, and it seemed that they had both ridden over from Fort Navajo. That was the way we three became acquainted."

During the narrative Glynne had seen Nona from time to time through the window, though Tyson was not aware that he was not absorbing, as he appeared to be, all his friend's attention. Nona here, playing battledore and shuttlecock with tennis balls on the lawn ; Nona there, talking volubly to an old gardener in a rough straw hat and blue jeans, who was spraying the flowers ; Nona leaping over the tennis nets, and then catching the old gardener around the waist and dragging him into a laboured waltz ; Nona dropping into a wicker chair and for five minutes at a stretch see-sawing her foot and reading a book ; Nona, tired of her book, picking up from the lawn a tame horned toad and catching flies for it ; Nona gravely conferring with a pig-tailed Chinese cook, who came out to consult her—and then Nona in her pink frock and her ribbons vanished for a while, leaving Julian Glynne impatient for her return.

"She's a wonder, is Nona," Tyson vouched. "I believe that girl's as strong as I am. She's a dead shot, and rides like an Indian. Yet she's a woman, clean through, and you could n't find a better house-keeper than Nona is. As for cooking ! She can do more with a chafing dish than a conjuror can do with his hat."

He paused in his eulogy.

"Guess I'm boring you ? "

Glynne beamed and shook his head.

"Well, there's not much more to tell. The Senator

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financed the mine, and we own it, except for a small minority interest. We are the best of friends, the Senator, Nona and I, and I make my home with them."

"The Senator?"

"Nona's father—Senator Plant."

"One of your courtesy titles?"

"Certainly not."

"A United States Senator?"

"Sure; that is, Senator-elect. He has n't taken his seat yet, but he will in December."

"The name is familiar to me in some way." Glynne searched his memory. "Oh, yes, it was something I saw in the newspapers when I was in the East."

"You mean the attempt to unseat him?"

"That was it."

"There was nothing in it, except politics and Mike Dougherty. Mike wanted the seat, and tried to crowd the Senator. Well, everybody knows what happens when anybody crowds the Senator. You might as well crowd a hedgehog. Some money was spent. Mike used it by the bucketful, illegitimately, and the Senator by the barrel, legitimately."

Tyson looked out of the window. "There is Nona now, and the Senator."

"Ah, yes, Miss Plant—you say her name is Verona, and you cut it to Nona? But the Senator? I do not see him."

"In the blue jeans."

"Quite so. I thought that was the—"

"That's the Senator. Come down and see him."

"Am I fit to be seen?" Glynne had changed

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the dressing-gown for a suit of Tyson's newest flannels.

"I wish they'd look half as well on me as they do on you," replied Tyson, with frank admiration, as he glanced at Glynne and noted his suave grace.

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Chapter III. Dinner at Sheba : :

WHEN they reached the lawn Glynne swiftly took in those exterior features of the house which he had not yet seen. Large enough for a country club, it was in some things a reproduction of an old Spanish mission, and in other ways it had gathered to itself the generous yet simple beauty of the "old Colonial" type—two stories high, rambling and roomy, with walls of pink adobe and a crouching roof of fluted red tiles. The garden had been made to thrive by irrigation, and alien flowers and shrubs touched and elbowed less dainty and less lovely native growths such as the cacti and the mesquit bushes, and the little pines and cedars, which held aloof like old settlers who had pre-empted the space from the beginning and were sullen in the face of invasion. The water, sprayed by the fountains and ribboned in the narrow canals, entered the grounds by a flume in the rear, which was looped on tressels to the spring in the distant hills. The lawn was green and soft and good for the eyes, and Glynne could hardly believe the flowers which nodded and shook in the fine and welcome

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moisture ; they were at his feet and within touch of his hand, bordering the smooth and closely clipped lawn, part of which was blocked out for a tennis court, while beyond—beyond the gates and the hedges formed of a shrub of waxy leaves and shining red bark, the arid plain rolled out to the horizon in lifeless waves, stinging the face with a glaring heat that writhed like the tongues of serpents. The derricks of the mine and the shanties and stores of the miners cropped up on a slope a mile away, and the old pueblo on the other flank of Manaña was not separable by the eye from the many-coloured table-lands which were set around it.

Glynne kept his eyes on Nona, who now mounted on a mustang, was again and again putting the prancing, agile little beast over the gate.

The Senator shook his hand and looked him over from head to foot. Glynne smiled and bowed, but had the sensation of a not altogether painless probing operation under the quick observation of the Senator's eyes. The pain, however, was no more than that of the sitter before a camera, who has confidence that though the lens may be too precise there will be artistic opportunities for "re-touching" the plate and softening it. As for the Senator, the challenge vanished from his face as it does from a photographer's when the posing is over and the click of the shutter completes what is expected to be a successful sitting.

The Senator was a rotund, rustic-looking man of an unmodified Saxon type, unparched by the desert heat and Western transplantation, who varied with circumstances from amiable and irresponsible garrulity to silence, decision and the quick execution of

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a steel trap. Glynne's camera clicked this time, and recorded latent stubbornness under superficial pliability.

He laughed again, and threw up his hands. That laugh of his had no strain or effort in it, and welled up as naturally as the song of a bird or the delight of a child.

“Is it a hold-up, Senator?”

His arms were upraised in a **V** until his finger-tips met over his head in an attitude of submission and supplication. The corners of the Senator's mouth curled and showed that their metal could be warmed into malleability.

“That's all right. We can go through you later if we want to. We've corralled you anyway. Glad to see you here at Sheba. Some of our people do not like the English as a nation, but I am not with them—not on all occasions. I am a friend of England, but not of her government, not of her aristocracy, not of her privileged classes, not of her hereditary legislators.”

“Why, pa, how you talk! He's one of them,” Nona protested, in the interest of politeness, indicating Glynne, who shook his head with deprecation.

“That's all right,” the Senator continued, in a cheerful response, to avert embarrassment. “We came from England, the Plants did—came in the Mayflower. Why, look at the name! What did it come from? Plant—Plantagenet. Hiram Plant for short, Hiram Plantagenet for long. I can prove it, sure as you're born. We've got a coat of arms and a family tree; got the whole story from a regular heraldic office in Leicester Square. I'll show them to you when we go indoors. Oh, you English are all

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right," he went on, "if you're only caught when you're very young. Look at Jim Tyson there. We caught him young, but not young enough to civilise him. He might have been a good American, but he's only an old Tory of about the time of George III., and hardly ever heard of George Washington ; did you, Jim ? . . . Well,—guesses he has heard the name somewhere perhaps."

The Senator had two manners—the forensic, which led him into flights of rhetoric, and the colloquial, which fitted him better and gave him infinitely greater ease. He was counting on the secretary he would have in Washington to sustain him in the former on official occasions and in writing his speeches for him, while as for the latter it would not be thought extreme or unusual in the private and social functions outside the Senate Chamber.

Starting from a New England farm in his boyhood, the Senator had grown up with the West, and seen the filling of the map as railways and settlements spread like rank-growing vines from the Missouri over the empty desert places, sinking their roots in plain, cañon and hill. His energy had spent itself diffusely in some visionary and profitless ventures with only rainbow rewards, though occasionally the desired riches had been almost within his grasp. Restless in temperament, sanguine, he had often pitched his tent in the mirage, or let the bird in hand escape while he followed a more enticing whistle in another quarter ; and so for years he had swung from ranch to mine and from mine to ranch without appreciably enriching himself. Easy-going and amiable by nature, he had occasionally allowed himself to be duped, and in the fierce race of the frontier he

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had sometimes been left behind, disheartened temporarily but not vanquished. Success came at last with the "Queen of Sheba," but out of that grew his quarrel with Mike Dougherty, the man he had befriended in early life and always trusted. From a dispute over a claim the feud had spread into politics and into social life with the bitterness and implacability of a vendetta, and Hiram Plant had suddenly called into action the sterner elements of his character, surprising those who had known him longest by the persistence and virility of his resistance.

Everywhere Nona had been with him in his wanderings, except in the childhood of her motherless life. Those early years had been divided between a relative in Chicago, and a period in San Francisco, where in her fourteenth year she had attended a young ladies' seminary conducted on modern lines, and under a not too repressive discipline. There she had been projected with facility from the elementary branches of academical knowledge into a "finishing course," the fullness and completeness of which in exterior graces as well as in intellectual development were certified by an emblazoned diploma on parchment, bearing three signatures and some Latin, now hanging in an ornate frame in her bed-room at Sheba. This parchment was Nona's supreme vanity, her palladium against the pretensions of others; but her natural knowledge, apart from the academic, had a variety and an extent not to be summarised on any mere sheet of parchment.

The Senator rather took to Glynne: Tyson, who had been watching, could see that, and he saw it with satisfaction.

"Took me for the gardener, eh?" the Senator

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said, smiling. "Well, the other day a fellow came up to me right where we are now, a stranger from somewhere and he says, 'Where's the boss?' 'You're lookin' at him,' I says. He looked north and he looked east, and he looked west and he looked south. 'I don't see no boss. What are you givin' us?' he says, and he walked off. I walked over to the house and took these old blue jeans off, and sat down in the library (say, I'm great on old books!). Then he came back, and John showed him in. 'I want to see the boss,' he began again, and blinked at me as if he war n't sure he recognised me. 'Look at him quick, then,' says I, 'for you've seen him twice, and I got no more time to lose. You ain't fit to be out here anyway, young man. Go back east. You've got your eyes too much on clothes.'"

Nona put her arm through his and drew him into the house. "You're not the boss, dad; I am," she asserted, and he beamed on her and stroked her hair, as they passed into the cool, lofty entrance hall, followed by Tyson and Glynne.

The mounted heads of elk, antelope, wolf, mountain sheep and bear stared glassily from the high, yellow and white walls.

"Nona's trophies," Tyson confided to his friend; "and see that rug there—the grizzly—that's her's too."

Glynne arched his eye-brows, and measured the huntress.

The early dinner was served with some formality by two noiseless and nimble Chinamen who seemed to be wafted about with aërial lightness and by seraphic impulse. It was not unappetising. There was

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fresh lamb from the pueblo, game from the neighbouring plains, and fruit from California. All went very well till a segment of a dark hard meat was placed before the Senator. He scrutinised it with exaggerated suspicion and grappled it with his fork, drawing in his lips and wrinkling his brow as if to prepare for an unusual effort. It resisted his knife and he pushed his plate away from him, winking at Glynne as he did so.

“Another of Nona’s trophies! Here, take it away, John, and give me some harm” (that was the way he pronounced it) “and some of that bird on the same plate.”

Nona’s eyes were orange and green, and all the decorum acquired in the San Francisco seminary was in peril.

“Look here, Senator, do n’t be too gay,” protested Tyson. “Do n’t let him bluff you, Nona.”

“Delicious,” murmured Glynne, and Nona insisted he should have some more.

“Why, it’s bear!” the Senator exclaimed, pretending to make a sudden discovery. “Nona got her old dad his favourite dish? How did she get it, for the land’s sake?”

He got up from his chair and went behind her and patted her, a form of caress that was frequent between them. “Look here, John,” he said, in an intentionally audible whisper, when he seated himself again, “if there’s any of that bear left when that Englishman has done eating, save it for me.”

The “area of depression,” as the English newspapers so often describe their weather, yielded to sunshine again, and the Senator turned to Glynne.

“Know the Queen very well, I guess?”

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“Very little.”

“And you an aristocrat !”

“That does not always count. Besides the word does not quite fit me, Senator.”

“But a man of birth ?”

“Is not always privileged.”

He smiled at Tyson to recall their conversation on that subject, and Tyson nodded back sympathetically. Nona was paring an apple, and listening with her mouth open, a habit she had which grated on Jim’s idea of elegance. She seemed to be always eating apples, or that was the effect of his irritated observation, and the eating involved abstraction and parted lips, and the look of Eve pondering on her sins.

“A Tory ?” continued the Senator.

“A conservative where beautiful things are concerned. I fear I am a rather vague sort of person, without coherence and without convictions. Politics do not interest me.”

Nona tossed her head, and her father half shut his eyes and drew in his lips. “Talking through his hat,” said Tyson.

“No, I am in earnest. I am like a gypsy born at a cross-road, four fingers on the white post pointing to four roads—the Navy, the Army, the Church, the Bar.”

The pictorial imagination of Tyson at once created the scene out of the symbol : a thatched cottage on a triangular green ; swelling hedgerows ; a duck-pond, and a tall white finger-post indexing the four quarters. To him the spoken word often conjured up pictures.

“Alas ! I was not meek enough for the Church,

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too honest for the Bar, too fond of dry land for the Navy, and—”

“Had no taste for war?” again Nona interrupted.

Glynn laughed. “No aptitude for it.”

“He was wounded at Omdurman,” said Tyson quickly, springing the information triumphantly as a matter of personal pride. He had been rapt in his friend’s revelations.

“I blundered in that as I have blundered in so many things.”

Nona and her father were in the presence of the unfamiliar, and they watched him and listened to him dubiously. He threw appealing glances to them as he talked, and smiled: his voice had a low vibration in it that at points evoked and expressed pathos; his smile was more plaintive than jocund, and when it ceased his face fell under a luminous shadow of meditation. He was enigmatic to them, and they let judgment wait on the entertaining perplexities which further experience might elucidate.

Out of one eye the Senator was scanning the interlacings of the Family Tree of the Plants, which hung over a fireplace, while he turned the other from Nona to Glynne and from Glynne to Tyson in impartial scrutiny.

“You like him now, do n’t you?” Tyson whispered to Nona, as they retired from the dining-room to the hall.

“‘A rather vague sort of person,’ ” she quoted disdainfully in Glynne’s voice.

“Can’t you see that’s only talk—the playful way such people have of expressing themselves to avoid being too serious?”

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“Oh, then he was n’t wounded at that place, and was n’t born at the cross-roads. That was just—ahem!—persiflage.”

Nona had carried another apple away with her from the table, and was munching it.

“Have you no sense of humour, Nona? Can’t you separate the wheat from the chaff? Of course he was wounded.”

“Talks an awful lot. Do you call him fine-looking, Jim?”

“You know he is.”

“I do n’t know. Looks as if he had n’t any grit. Talks somehow like a parlour organ.”

Nona glanced around guardedly. Her father was drawing his finger intricately down the Family Tree from the twig on which his own name blossomed to the roots buried in the mould of the Plantagenets. She looked with furtive fondness at Tyson, at his slack figure, at his plain face with the round, gleaming, honest, spectacled eyes. Then she took the apple out of her mouth and deliberately pressed a warm kiss behind his ear.

“You’re more my style than he is, Jim,” she said, and at that moment Glynne was just coming in, secretly yawning behind the Senator’s back.

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Chapter IV. A Difficult Trail, an Old Pueblo and a Woman in White :

NONA was going over to Fort Navajo that afternoon to see Mrs. Dennison, the colonel's widow, who was to chaperon her when she went East, and she invited Glynne to accompany her. Two ponies were led up to the porch by a cowboy in buckskin and sombrero, who rendered such services without any consciousness or manifestation of inferiority. Tyson, Glynne, and even the Senator himself were "you fellows" to him, though Nona for her sex and his own mother's received a simple tribute of deference, and was addressed as "marm."

The pony brought for her use was the one Glynne had already seen, spirited but docile, with speaking ears and a secret belief that his mistress's real name was Sugar. That intended for Glynne seemed determined to be a biped, and to prove that its forelegs were superfluous except as arms and hands to juggle with. More like a rampant unicorn than a horse, he rocked on his haunches and blew out his nostrils till they flamed like balls of red fire.

The cowboy's bristling moustache twitched in

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Nona's direction, but Nona pulling on her gloves was demurely unobservant.

Glynne still smiled, though somewhere behind he suppressed other emotions.

"You can ride, of course, Mr. Glynne?" said Nona, with insidious smoothness as she wrenched the button at her wrist.

"Certainly, but—"

"But?"

"Any ordinary mount out of an ordinary stable—but not the steeds of the Valkyries. Now that looks, that beast, as if he had sprung out of an antique frieze. Really he is quite mythological."

"Torp—Torpedo?"

"What a nice name!"

"He's all right," said the cowboy, whose moustache had been wagging like the trick fixture of a clown. "Honest, he's all right. Fresh? Yes. Playful? Yes. Like to dance, don't you, Torp? Want to shake hands and kiss the gentleman?"

The bronco was pawing the air like an educated poodle.

Glynne pulled on his own gloves, a borrowed pair, and edged down to Apaché, Nona's pony.

"Then you won't go with me, Mr. Glynne, if you are afraid of Torp?" she said, with a turn of the head.

"Go with you? Indeed I shall Miss Plant. But really I'm hardly up to riding high explosives. I may go up all right, but look out for the fragments when I come down."

He smiled with desperate gaiety, and nimbly, with a look at Nona, vaulted into the saddle. A fearful moment for him followed, and the colour sank in his

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face, but he set his teeth and dug his knees into the bronco with a determination and a skill that surprised Nona and the man.

Just then Tyson came out of the house.

“For God’s sake! What’s this? Here, Glynne, don’t ride that brute; he’ll throw you, sure. Why did you give him that for a mount, Chid?”

Chidsey, the man, twitched the bronze wire wings of his moustache. “He’s all right. Hell; I did n’t allow that tenderfoot could ride like that.”

Torpedo hung his neck and arched his back till he seemed to be suspended from the girth by an aerial pulley. Glynne held his seat and with a dig at the brute’s flank rode him through the gates and out into the sandy plain. Again and again the brute balked, and with clustered hoofs and rigid legs bounded up and down with mechanical inflexibility. Glynne slid over his shoulders and lost a stirrup, but recovered himself and again forced a gallop—a frenzied gallop—then a respectable canter, and finally a shaking, unwilling walk, the pace at which after a hot circuit of a mile he rode up, capless, to the porch.

“Are you *quite* ready, Miss Plant?” he asked coolly, and turning to Tyson, “I must borrow another cap: a beggar on horseback, you know. What a cadger you must think me!”

Nona was still smarting under Tyson’s remonstrances.

“He—Torp—is a little bit skittish, is n’t he?” she said ingenuously; and then, “Perhaps you do n’t have horses like that in England. Let Chid get you another, Mr. Glynne.”

Chidsey’s moustaches drooped in suspense, but when he heard Glynne’s answer they shot out again

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like bayonets, and Chidsey's future allegiance to the Englishman was secure.

"Oh dear no ! This was your choice, Miss Plant, and I cannot think of changing."

Tyson went over to the mine, and Nona and Glynne galloped off in the direction of Fort Navajo. There was a road, but at Nona's suggestion they followed an old trail which the Indians had strung across the desert long ago : it was invisible to Glynne, but she picked up and unravelled the faint thread with the unerring eye of a plainsman. The sun was high in the fleckless violet sky, and the landscape looked crisped, charred and brittle. The buttresses of the yellow and red table-lands stood out like the rams of war-ships ; farther off, scores of miles farther than any stranger would have thought, some scollops of snow were lifted on the higher peaks into the sky ; the sandy levels of the plains spreading interminably with dull prolixity were tangled and matted with the hoary coarse-fibred sage-brush. Everything had a vitreous glitter and sharpness, and an observer from a distance would have seen in the man and the woman riding there a resemblance to the little toy figures which are crystallized and imprisoned in frosted glass globes. The solitude was complete, and the silence broken only by their voices and the wind droning in their ears. Once a rattlesnake scurried across their path, and when they pulled up, clattered his castanets in menace ; a coyote sneaked away at their approach, and a jack-rabbit whisked into the brush. Again Nona pulled up to show a pale watery-looking centipede three inches long, and farther on she pointed out a tarantula, a Goliath of the spiders, bearing his opulent bulk on his hairy stilts like a portly undertaker.

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Township of prairie dogs defied them, turned tail, and defied them more noisily than ever: a dark spot hovering in the encompassing blue was an eagle.

Nona, with a new sweetness and a softer smile, looked on Glynne with friendlier eyes than ever before. She was mollified and attracted by his courage with the horse, as he intended she should be, and conscious of his propitiation he found her more alluring in the spacious, windy and aromatic convexity of sky and plain than in the confinement of the house. She belonged to this spaciousness as much as did the infrequent *fauna*, and fitted the landscape as a kins-woman to all that it held. Her rounded figure had no slackness or superfluity; her lips were as red as red carnations, with a drift of pearly white beneath, and under the silky shelter of their lashes her eyes sparkled like sea ripples in a copper bronze sunset. From admiration Glynne's emotion ran into compassion—compassion for her motherlessness, for her crudity, for her social impossibility, for her vulgar simplicity. He checked himself impatiently. No, she was not vulgar nor crude. He wheeled on the words, and revised his opinion.

He had been measuring her by a standard which did not apply to her, by a dressmaker's tape, by a governess's eye,—by those conventions he himself often sinned against and despised, by those parodies of propriety and conspiracies against Nature which make mirth for devils and pageantries for hypocrites. Of her time and place she was admirable—admirable in her freedom and naturalness, and as expressive of present conditions as the Indian was of earlier days.

He surprised himself by the heat of his recanta-

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tion ; wondered at it ; confirmed it ; and then offered her another of the fragments of uncertain length and undetermined purpose which had been serving them as colloquy.

“ Do you know,” he said, “ Tyson somehow seems out of place here. I cannot think of him as a practical man, a man of mechanics, a man of business, a man of fortune. He ought to have been a poet or a painter ; he is a dreamer, and looks at things through the imagination, not with actual eyes. When he talks about England it is easy to fancy oneself in a landscape painter’s studio ; he makes me think of Jack Ellery (Jack’s an Academician), who thinks England is the seat of all the beauty of the world.”

“ Oh, Jim’s a crank. The trouble with him is that he’s in love.” She tossed her head.

“ That is easy enough to understand.”

“ I suppose everybody in love is a crank ? ” she ventured.

“ I leave that to the wisdom of woman. My experience in such matters is that women are the only pilots ; they know all the depths and all the soundings.”

“ I do n’t mean in love with a woman. I mean in love with that old England. Is it really so beautiful ? I knew plenty of girls in San Francisco who had been to Europe, and they all said they loved Paris and hated London, and not only London but everything English. They said you English were such snobs. What are old Family Trees anyhow ? ” she asked unguardedly.

“ Rotten timber, generally—that is, *some* are. I do not boast of mine.”

She pulled in Apaché, and the plain, blistering and

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splintery in the profulgent air, was riven by a dark chasm undiscoverable until they stood on its brink. There they stood with the simmering level like a vast floor behind and to the right and the left of them, and before them a black ravine with vertical walls plunging down to a narrow bed of reddish sand. Huge, purplish boulders were tumbled along the bed, and among them a thin stream like a silver wire unwound itself and rippled among clusters of cottonwood, which hung from fissures and ledges in the wall, their leaves dancing and singing in the wind like the spray of a fountain.

The unexpectedness of the approach, the absence of any premonitory sign of change in the continuity of the plain, until the gap itself opened at their feet like a wound suddenly inflicted, gave the beholders an inevitable shock which even Nona could not altogether evade.

She searched Glynne's face for the effect which in her own was expressed in parted lips and widened eyes.

He was pale and awed.

"Dantesque," he said. "Yes, one can fancy hearing the moans of Paola and Francesca down there." And then, "Come on," pointing his horse away from the abyss.

"No, we go down here. This is the way."

He looked again. Foothold was possible in a zig-zag course which sloped from bench to bench, now carved in narrow galleries and then looped around the loose detritus, but the angle—what foolhardiness!

"We always go down here; it's the regular trail," she urged. "It's easy."

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Already Apaché's fore-feet were on the declivity, put forth guardedly like those of a stalking cat, and all Nona's weight was thrown on his haunches.

“Do n't be silly, Miss—”

“Nona.”

“Miss Nona.”

“Just Nona.”

“Look here, Nona! You still think I am a coward; you thought so when you gave me this beast to ride. But—”

“Come on.”

“I am thinking of you. Why be foolhardy?”

Her head was bared, and her brown hair, blown out in the wind, alone remained visible above the sharp-cut edge of the precipice.

“Well, if you will, you sorceress!”

“Torp” was behaving well, and seemed to be ready for the responsibility before him and not a novice in such difficulties.

“Why not dismount and walk?” Glynne persisted.

“Nobody walks down here.”

The cold air of the cañon blew upon them, and their eyes blinked in the change from the glare above to the twilight below. Loose stones were started, and rumbled ominously into the depths; the tossing of the cotton-woods surged like a cascade. Apaché and his companion picked their way and pricked their ears at the angles; and when stepping was impossible stiffened their legs and slid. Near the bottom the trail spread and became easier, and then Glynne dismounted and slung his reins over his arm. He was abreast of Nona, and she stood still to look up at the precarious path above them and the azure roof of

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sky that bridged the gulf. Both of them were flushed and glowing with excitement.

“Fine, is n’t it! Looking down from up there is just like being a bird in the air. That’s the way I feel at that pinnacle—just as if I could fly. You liked it?” she asked.

“Yes! But I’d rather trust myself to a comfortable pair of wings than to *Torpedo* or *Apaché* if I had to come down again. Still if you asked me to come again I’d come—yes, even unconditionally.”

“Did n’t I tell you it was dead easy? Why, you can drive an ambulance down there. Sometimes the government mules fall off, but they pull themselves together at the bottom, and smile, that’s all.”

“It was nothing, then?”

“Nothing worth speaking of, but you’re no slouch.”

They were standing in an alcove of the cliff, and the walls seemed to topple together at the height from which they had descended, like a trap which might at any moment snap and close against the light of day. Some rays of sunshine slanted in and played among the delicate quivering leaves of the cottonwoods with light fingers, and burnished the clear stream flowing through the sand in the bed of the cañon.

“There’s nothing like this in England, is there?” she asked, with a plaintive note of appeal.

“Nothing.”

“Yet if Jim were here and you spoke to him about it, all he would do would be to talk about England. ‘Oh, you should see this, that, or the other, in England.’ I get tired of it. I tell you he’s a crank.

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And he's so unreasonable! If he'd wait till next year father and I could go with him."

"I feel embarrassed. I feel as though *I* were being impeached—held up as Jim's *alter ego*. See"—he touched them as he named them—"Jim's cap, Jim's coat, Jim's trousers, Jim's shirt, Jim's cigarette—I'm endowed with part of his identity. Now, if I were Jim, all Jim—not an *alter ego*—I'd wait for you."

She looked at him saucily. "Yes, but you're not Jim; not a little bit Jim."

She was remounting when the loose stones slid under Apaché's hoofs and he slid away from her down the trail before she had regained her seat. She quickly released her foot from the stirrup, but stumbled backward into Glynne's arms.

Her first thought was for the horse, but Apaché stood looking up and winking his ears a few feet below, evidently waiting for her to come to him and reproaching her for the mishap.

"Good boy! Good boy!" she called.

Glynne still held her, though his support was superfluous, and for an exquisite moment of tremor, during which her attention was directed to Apaché, he pressed her against him.

Nona's upper lip had a little twist in the middle like a bow which some day, somewhere, some man would kiss. Why not this man now? Tyson? Ah! But—what damned folly!

She plucked herself away from him and faced him.

"Why, you look dizzy!" she exclaimed. "Let me help you."

The bottom was not far below now, and reaching

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it soon they sat down on a boulder by the stream and gazed up at the purple walls and buttresses, and the arch of blue sky. A slant of sun poured down upon them like a flaming sword, and brought into relief the spires and turrets which had been splintered from the mural masses.

“I say, if we only had some tea!” he exclaimed, with restored gaiety.

“Tea? What do you want with tea?” she asked blankly.

“Afternoon tea, do n’t you know, is part of the Englishman’s religion. People in England walk, ride, row, climb mountains and play golf and croquet to one end, one goal—tea. They think they are toiling for views, or the game, but their real object is tea and thin bread-and-butter.”

“How funny! Jim does n’t care for tea. He likes mint juleps—strong. I can mix them just the way he and father likes them.”

The ascent to the plain on the other side was accomplished without difficulty, as it led up a wide bench with an easy gradient; and a mile beyond the top they reached the fort, one of the last of the old frontier barracks of fragile adobe, brown, one-storied, quadrangular, and primitive in accommodation, with the flag purring in fluent beauty from a white eagle-crested staff in the centre of the interior court. A few Indians and their squaws, muffled up in the oriental splendour of their Navajo blankets, squatted and puffed corn-husk cigarettes and fixed envious eyes on the canteen, near the entrance, and Glynne was interested in the soldiers who were loitering about in high boots, flannel shirts and breeches, and wide-brimmed hats, slim,

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lithe and brawny, like men of wire and steel and leather.

Nona at once took him to the colonel's quarters, and there before the door in easy chairs and hammocks were gathered on variegated blankets and buffalo robes, Colonel Morrison, Mrs. Morrison, Mrs. Dennison, Major Hargreaves and Captain Scott. Nona was patted on the cheek by the colonel, kissed and embraced by the women, and saluted in military fashion by the major and the captain, and then when she and Glynne were seated and he had been introduced, the talk turned on Tyson.

"He's really going, is he?" said the colonel. "Tell him I'll give him some letters to the Embassy in London. Jack Corbin, the military attaché there, will like him, and may be of use to him."

"Tell him I got the check for the orphanage from him; he'd no right to send so much," said the colonel's wife.

"Tell him that every time he writes to me I wish his French was as good as his heart is big," said Mrs. Dennison.

"Tell him," the colonel continued, "that when those cigars of his are finished I shall have to quit smoking, because every other weed will taste like Connecticut cabbage."

"Tell him," said the major, winking at the captain, "that his cologne is elegant, and that we'd like to bathe in it night and morning."

"Tell him," said the colonel, "that if he sends any more fire-water to Fort Navajo there will be a court martial."

Glynne was smiling impartially and holding himself with modest diffidence.

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“Oh, I forgot,” cried Nona. “Mr. Glynne wants some tea.”

The three officers rose to their feet, and became rigid.

“Tea!” cried the colonel.

“Tea!” repeated the major, in a deeper voice.

“Tea!” wailed the captain, in a vocal crescendo of disbelief and panic.

“Come on!” they chorused, and dragging him from his chair they led him across the quadrangle, and disappeared with him through a doorway on the other side of the court yard. “You shall have some tea!”

When the men were gone Nona confided to the women the story of Glynne’s accident, and of Tyson’s growing friendship with him.

“Well, I always say that English people are attractive—that is, the men,” said Mrs. Dennison, who with an experience extending from frontier posts in Alaska to legations and embassies in Europe and Asia, was listened to as an indisputable arbiter. “He is certainly charming,” she went on, “and that smile of his would dissolve an ice-berg. These young Englishmen have a really excellent manner and appearance, and much more of the old-fashioned courtier about them than our young men; our boys are too blunt, too abrupt, and now that they shave so much they look so jowly, so much like prize-fighters and actors.”

“Mr. Glynne doesn’t look at his best now,” Nona admitted.

“He is very good-looking, dear.”

“You see, I don’t know what to make of him, and Jim’s such a fool about him, so I gave him *Torpedo*

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for a mount and brought him down the cañon by the Devil's Trapeze."

"What!"

"Yes, I did. I suppose that when we get home father—Jim—will give me h—"

Mrs. Dennison shrieked and put her hand over Nona's mouth, and the word got no further than the first letter.

"I don't care," said Nona defiantly. "The Bible's full of it."

"Glynne, Glynne," mused Mrs. Dennison. "Did you say that he is a relation of Lord Langdale, dear?"

"He says he is. I don't know. We only know what he says."

"How very curious!" said the colonel's wife. "We have an English lady visiting us now, Mrs. Dunmail, the wife of an English general. Only this morning she happened to speak of Lord Langdale. Lieutenant Belknap has taken her over to the pueblo. They'll be back soon."

"We can't wait," replied Nona, "but we are going back that way. I promised him I'd show him the ruin on the way home."

By a muddy river of the consistency and colour of *café-au-lait* stands a pueblo far older than that near Sheba, far older than any other in the south-western country, the remains of a civilized settlement which has left no other record than this as an example of its architecture. From afar it looks like a bare and massive *mesa* or a butte, and within its walls can be counted over a hundred chambers, tier on tier, and an altar on which, presumably, burned the sacred fires of Montezuma. As in the pueblo at Sheba, the only ac-

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cess to the successive stories is from within by ladder from the interior court, and all apertures for light and air also face the court, the external walls being solid and eyeless, so that in any siege the inhabitants expected or endured they could conceal their movements and shut themselves up as in a box, with only the lid open to the sky. The walls are as thick as those of a fortress, and instead of being of the friable, easily moulded adobe they are of masonry skilfully set slab on slab, without mortar, though every joint, chink and cranny is filled with smaller slabs that fit like a mosaic. Twenty-five years ago fragments of pottery were plentiful within and without the walls, decorated with bands and scrolls of blue and red, and in some instances shaped like the birds and beasts of the plains and the mountains. These and the house itself are the only vestiges, the only memorials, of the people that lived here and derived sustenance from the sterile, blighted land in which there is now neither fuel, drinkable water, nor anything edible. Without history, bare, unsheltered by vine or moss, grey as though charred by fire, the pueblo is like a huge stone coffin, as silent and as mysterious as the Sphinx or the Pyramids.

An army ambulance, which, by the way, is a vehicle of general utility on the plains, serving on occasion as the state carriage of the commanding officer, and for as many odd jobs as a hack and an express waggon combined, was drawn up in the shade, and the driver, with his broad hat tipped over his nose, was braced in sleep across the front seat.

“I’ll wait here,” said Nona to Glynne when they arrived. “Do n’t be long.”

And Glynne passed through what had been the

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sole entrance of the pueblo. She had not told him of Mrs. Dunmail and the lieutenant, and he had not asked why the ambulance was waiting there. He picked his way among the loose stones and earth, and climbed up the shattered end of one of the walls which rose from the level to the first tier of the terraced buildings.

Then he heard voices, a man's and a woman's, in another part of the ruin, and though the woman lingered out of sight he saw the man in a blue uniform pass out, and heard him hail Nona familiarly. From another wall to which he climbed wearily the woman was visible, loitering in one of the cubicles, and absently feeling with her fingers the flaked stone which filled the crevices.

There was something spectral about her in the dusk and silence, and yet she was too palpable and modern to sustain the illusion of a phantasm for more than a moment. Her dress was of some creamy white material from head to foot, and as he looked closer he could see that the pallor of her face was intensified by the darkness of her hair and her eyes. She was young, not more than thirty, and carried herself with a sorrowful grace. In the shade she stood out luminously as if bathed in phosphorescence like the picture of a queen he vaguely remembered, and as he gazed the association of the picture forced the recognition into greater definiteness.

He watched her without moving himself: he watched her so intently that he did not know his tongue was dry in his mouth, and his face as blanched as hers, and beaded with moisture.

She sat down and read a letter, which she afterwards replaced in the bosom of her dress, and then

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he saw her put her handkerchief to her eyes. His impulse was to avoid her, to drop to the ground, to hide himself in one of the shadowy angles of the wall; but his foot displaced a stone and sent it rattling down, and she lifted her eyes and discovered him, staggering as she recognized him.

He descended and advanced to meet her. She put out her arms to him, but his face, his attitude, repulsed her.

“ Julian ! Julian ! ” she cried.

“ What miracle has brought you here, Ethel ? ”

“ Mrs. Dennison—at the fort—I met her in New York—an old friend. Oh, Julian, why did you leave me like that ? And you, dear, how came you here ? ”

“ Trying to forget ; trying to begin anew,” he sighed.

“ We can begin anew, we can, both of us, dear,” she urged, putting her hands on his shoulders, and lifting her own moist eyes to his that were cold. “ Gerald is dead. Have you not heard ? Yes, dead. Oh, poor Gerald ! ”

“ Dead ! ” A dark surmise crossed Glynne’s face, and he shuddered. “ Not suicide ? ”

“ No, no ! He was killed in the charge at—”

“ He meant to be killed. You may call it what you like,” he said resentfully, after a breathless pause. “ You saw him before he went away ? ”

“ Never after he found out that we—He would n’t see me ; he would n’t write. Poor Gerald ! ”

“ Poor Gerald ! ” Glynne repeated bitterly.

“ But we are free now, dear, free,” she persisted.

“ Free ? Never less free ! Free ? Good God ! Ethel ! Can’t you see ? Are you blind ? That man separates us now as in his life he could not do.”

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“ You mean that you will not—that we cannot be together any more ? ”

He took her hands off his shoulder and gently pushed her away. “ Hush ! There is Nona calling—the girl who is with me. Not a word about this meeting to anybody. Go—go—go—go at once. I will write. Yes, I will see you again, but go ! ”

He dropped on to a stone and held his head in his palms. Through closed eyes he saw Gerald Dunmail plainly, Gerald horsed and in tattered uniform in the flame and splutter of battle, heard him laugh fiercely as he plunged forward through smoke and blood, and then saw him fling up his arms and reel from his saddle, smiling gently at him—at him, Julian Glynne.

Nona was standing over him. “ Did n’t you see Mrs. Dunmail ? She ’s just gone. She knows you, so Mrs. Morrison said. What a curious woman ; she ’s like a ghost. Why, what ’s the matter with you ? Are you ill ? Come along. Let ’s get home.”

Nona’s conscience was full of stings, and her remorse prompted her to do all she could to cheer her companion as they rode across the darkening plain by the direct trail which avoided the cañon. She chatted with him, praised his courage, mimicked Tyson and Chidsey for him, and sang droning little Pueblo songs to amuse him ; and he smiled and pretended to be gay, but the smile—what was he smiling at ? He was smiling back through clouds of smoke and fire at Gerald.

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Chapter V. Tyson's Dreams of Home

WHEN Nona and Glynne reached Sheba the sky was full of stars, and Tyson was pacing the lawn, pipe in his mouth and hands in his pockets, waiting for them. They could hear him singing in the way he had, changing the key from verse to verse, and ranging from falsetto to the deep baritone of his natural voice. Now it was "Early One Morning," and then "The Lass of Richmond Hill," now "The North Country Maid," who to London had strayed, and then "Barbara Allen," followed by "The Vicar of Bray." When the belated ones came slowly up to the porch, it was to the jocund call of "Lasses and Lads."

Nona sighed with pleasurable relief as she retired, and Glynne was pale, so pale that Tyson held him under the hall light by both shoulders and looked apprehensively into his face.

"Well, you must have done the whole thing,—taken in the whole show," said Tyson. "That girl's a terror."

"Oh, no! She's all right, as you say. I'm a bit tired, and . . . No, nothing to eat now, thank

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you, but a brandy and soda ; yes, I 'll have a brandy and soda."

"Come right in," said Tyson, leading the way to his "den." "Sit right there."

He put Glynne into a soft, wide-armed chair, seated himself opposite, and tossed another log into the pine-wood fire. "Sit right there, and let 's talk about England."

The lustrous red walls above the ivory white book-shelves, which held some good editions of English classics, were pregnant with texts for the topic, and through the wreaths of his smoke Tyson looked with the half-closed eyes of clairvoyance on his pictures, and beyond them to the scenes they depicted, his imagination endowing the prints with the tints and movements of various seasons, the breath of life, and the message of the senses in colour and scent.

He saw the Wear creeping with rippling feet around the bluffs of Durham, the grey towers of the cathedral and the buttressed walls of the university high above the cataract of foliage ; he could hear the rooks jarring over the battlements, and the surpliced boys chanting, "Give peace in our time, O Lord !"

And here down a vista in a hill of grey-columned beeches lay Selborne the smallest of villages, a jewelled string of thatched and half-timbered pink and white cottages, hedged with hawthorn and scarlet fuchsias, each in its own sweet-smelling, embowered garden, with the ancient manor house and the old church and its silent moss-grown graveyard, crouching among yews, oaks and elms. The people came to his vision, simple, amiable, slow-footed, low-voiced, driving their flocks and herds, toiling in their fields,

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and gossiping at their gates until the twilight caught the village in its shroud, and, after a desperate struggle of the roses to burn a deeper crimson, and pierce the gloom with a more luminous white, the night picked up the corners and put out the last ray of the early bed-time candles.

All the pictures on the walls were of England in some form of its sedate beauty: its calm rivers; its cloistral groves; its deep-grooved flowery lanes, and its peaceful hamlets. In the contemplation of them in his exile, Tyson yearned to be in the scenes themselves, to see them and to breathe them through the senses, and not in the unsubstantial play of the imagination. They were but dreams to him so far, for he was a town-bred lad, and had seldom been farther afield than the outskirts of his native county: the excursion to Langdale had been his longest journey. . . .

Then as he stared into the sparks and flames and the rolling smoke on the hearth another picture appeared: Winter in a provincial town; muddy streets; sooty houses; rain and wind; cold without frost or snow; puddles from gutter to gutter; blinking gas-lamps and creepy rays of light from gin-palaces groping like fingers across the wet and mud for filthy treasure. A shivering boy leading a little girl by the hand, both soaked, both hungry, both jostled, both very, very cold. . . . The log split in the middle, and the picture flew up the chimney in sparks.

“ You seem drowsy, old man,” said Glynne.

“ I? Oh no! Not a bit,” cried Tyson coming out of his dream. “ I was down the mine all the afternoon. Things are looking splendidly; there ’ll be an extra dividend, sure.” He paused thoughtfully and

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then went on with enthusiasm : “ But what I’m thinking of is being back in England. Say, Glynne, I’m not up to the quality. I’ll be making all kinds of mistakes, and they’ll laugh at me. I’ve got no society manners, though there is some good blood in our family. I don’t care about meeting all those swells you speak about, Lord Langdale and Lady Cheam, your sister, and the rest—I’m afraid of them, and that’s a fact. But the country, the fields and the field-paths, and the little villages, and Oxford and Cambridge (Lord ! If I could only have gone to one of the universities ! I dreamed of it when my stomach was empty and my feet were wet), yes, they are what I’m pining for, and the good common people, the children with golden hair and blue pinafores, and the rosy old women knitting under the rambler roses in their porches ! I’ll be too late for the hawthorn and the laburnum, but the limes will be in bloom. Ah, I can smell them now ! Of course the hawthorn’s more beautiful, but there’s nothing to beat the scent of the limes : it seems to draw out one’s soul.”

Glynne rose and patted him on the shoulder. A clock was ticking and the fire roaring. “ They will like you over there ; it is impossible not to like you, Tyson, but will you like them ? Do n’t hold yourself too lightly, do n’t be afraid of yourself.”

“ I can’t stand any patronizing, I can tell you that, lord or no lord,” Tyson declared decisively.

“ You will find the best of us—of them—very considerate,” Glynne continued leisurely. “ The best of the upper classes are unpretentious, and though they are not heedless of birth and pedigree they seldom let their pride in such matters affect their conduct ; they are shy of their distinction, and a little afraid of it.

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This is not true of all. There are some louts like Kingswold, the Duke of Kingswold: he is a survival of the mediaeval man of privilege, a solemn, surly, supercilious bully, who despises every body, and thinks the crown itself *parvenu*. Perhaps he is not altogether wrong in that: royalty nowadays is very queer, indiscriminate, unselect. In private it has no conceptions and no tastes higher than those of the suburban villa, or of Earl's Court and Bayswater, and it is always begging or borrowing. Look at old Mercia, the Duke of Mercia: he borrows fivers from girls in the music-halls and actors in pot-house clubs; you can't trust him with your cigar-box, for if you let him have it he takes out handfuls and at the same times re-lights an old stump that he had been saving in his waistcoat pocket, and I believe if his other pockets had rubber linings he'd empty the decanter into them whenever he is offered a drink. Beware of him, Tyson, when you are launched in society; the confidence man sometimes wears a coronet."

Tyson listened dubiously. Glynne's voice was a little strained and bitter. Was he quite fair in what he was saying?

"Launched in society!" Tyson repeated. "Come, Glynne, no nonsense. I'm no society man, and never shall be." Nevertheless the idea had furtive charms for him.

"You can succeed if you care to. Money goes a long way when it is wisely spent, in London: it is like the trumpet of a herald calling for capitulation; one blast and down come the gates. Look at Sir John Titter: he is the apotheosis of vulgarity, and combines in his trade every trade derided in novels and farcical comedy, butter, gin, pork and soap—an

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illiterate boor, but closer than the Prime Minister to certain illustrious personages. Look at Dicky Lansing, the American, a cad in dress and manners, with a voice like a goat's and fingers bejewelled from knuckles to nails. You know him. He made his way by giving stock-market tips that turned out well to duchesses, and now the duchesses take him out with their poodles for airings in the park. Then there's Sir Peter Grooby, who owns nearly half of all the miserable gin-palaces in the slums of provincial towns, and whose opulence thrives on the vice of our fellow-countrymen : he is father-in-law to three of the oldest peerages, he whose crest should be a drunken hag and a gin-bottle. Do you hold yourself inferior to such people, Tyson?"

"You're exaggerating. Your liver's out of order. You're an old cynic, that's what you are," said Tyson, staunch in faith.

"You have personality to prosper you as well as money," Glynne went on, "and you can do what you like. At the outset you may meet some rebuffs but you must meet insolence with insolence, play the paradox, shrug your shoulders at convention, and shock people by your originality. Avoid diffidence, and be as arrogant as possible, especially with the middle classes ; they are beneath contempt, know it, and do not mind. Above all, be careful to conceal this passion of yours for England ; it is out of date, not good form, and would be considered banal.

"There," said Glynne, in conclusion, "I have added to your knowledge from experiences and convictions of my own, and feel as if I had been writing a supplementary chapter to Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son*."

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Glynne shook off his depression. The glow and crackle of the logs on the hearth, the pleasant fatigue slowly passing in the warmth and ease of his arm-chair, the pictures and the books and other luxuries of the "den" exorcised the memory of the pale woman, and he could jest with Tyson and laugh without pinch or prick of conscience, and without wincing.

"Of course the first thing I've got to do is to look for Bessie," said Tyson, "and everything will depend on whether I find her or not. Poor girl, I wonder what has become of her! You remember how I thought it was Bessie when I awoke at the spring and found Nona standing there? Ah, so many years have passed that I'm afraid—afraid!"

"Oh, a girl like that often falls into the hands of benevolent persons," said Glynne, though his thoughts dwelt on sinister possibilities that Tyson could not contemplate. "She may have been adopted by somebody; she may have— But cheer up, dear old boy. Here's success to your quest! I hope you will find her well and happy, a sister to be proud of, as amiable as yourself and as beautiful as Miss Plant. As I have said, whatever I can do—"

"Look here, Glynne, you are coming with me," cried Tyson impulsively. "I want you to; it will be a help to me. Yes, you're coming! We can be in New York in three days, and then I'll blow you off at Delmonico's and we'll sail in the fastest ship that goes, and in the best rooms she's got. . . . Six days of the old Atlantic and then! If the season's behindhand there may be a bit of hawthorn left; but no, I guess it's too late for that."

Glynne shook his head. "Impossible."

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“Why impossible? Can’t afford it? I’ll lend you whatever you need.”

“What a generous soul you are!”

“Or see here! I’ll buy some shares of Sheba for you to-morrow; I’ll provide the margin, and take care of the stock for you. It’s a sure thing: you’ll get five points profit within a week, and then you’ll not need to borrow. How will that suit you?”

“I may go as far as New York with you, but for the present I cannot return to England. There’s a reason, Tyson, a good reason: I am under a cloud.”

Glynne looked grave, and his head drooped; no smile remained in his face. Tyson was troubled, but unsuspicuous of anything serious. His confidence in his friend rejected sinister surmises: Glynne was too sensitive, after the manner of his class, and viewed his imprudence too grievously.

“I’m sorry to hear that,” said Tyson, who was indisposed to question, and ready with absolution and remission for any confession that he might hear. “Some foolishness, I suppose. Oh, well, we all make mistakes sometimes.”

“Oh, Tyson, why is the world full of women?”

And Tyson, the soul of honour, the punctilious and reverential among women, sophisticated himself for his friend, and laughed and made light of the aberration hinted at. “You’re a sad dog, Julian,” he said, slapping Glynne on the shoulder with a jocularity not altogether spontaneous, “but if the world did begin with one women it need n’t end in the same way. I’m no Puritan. You take it too seriously, old fellow; you’re not going to keep yourself out of

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England for ever because you—because you got rattled by a pretty woman?"

"Not for ever, but I cannot go back now. I have things to see to. While you are there, before you come back—yes, we must meet in England."

"And you'll come to New York with me anyway. I'll want some coaching to prepare me for my *début* as a society man, eh? You'll have to give me wrinkles in the art of tying the cravat and the cut of my coat—a sort of dress rehearsal. I must n't disgrace you when I present those letters to Lord Langdale and Lady Cheam."

Glynne went to bed, and Tyson, lighting a fresh cigar, passed out to the lawn and looked at the stars, which were shaking like lilies in the wind and raining their silver on the upheaved buttes and the slumbering mysterious plain. Nona slipped out, and passing her arm through his, rubbed her cheek against his sleeve. She was warm and fragrant as she pressed against him, and when he smiled on her he saw that her face was sad.

"I see nothing of you now, Jim, since that Englishman came. Don't you care for me any more? You're with him the whole time."

"Don't be a child, Nona. Of course I care for you—just as much as ever."

The vagueness disappointed her. "As much as ever." No more,—no such surging of the heart as her own heart knew. She sighed and interlocked her fingers with his. "Don't go, Jim; don't go," she pleaded, in an urgent whisper. "I want you to stay. Stay anyhow till next year."

He met the pleading with impatience.

"I'm mean, I know I'm mean," she hurried on. "I

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know you ought to go, for Bessie's sake ; but come back soon, dear, and come back just as you are, not changed a little bit. You like me, do n't you, Jim ?" she cried pathetically.

" Like you ?" he repeated. " I adore you, and you know it."

Nona shook her head, and was not convinced.

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Chapter VI. Some Transactions in Wall Street : : : : :

ARIVED in New York, Tyson took Glynne to a broker's in Wall street, where the well dressed, extremely prosperous looking young man in the customers' room met them with an effusive welcome.

Glynne was mystified. His eyes wandered over the paraphernalia of the room : the tickers delivering with a squirrel-like chatter the white momentous tape ; the numerous telephones in constant employment on the young man's desk and elsewhere ; the stooping clerks behind their brass screens, and the customers poring over the fluctuating records of the market. One sallow man with a droop in his left eye, which he strained obliquely on the tape, was absurdly like a many-wintered crow in search of a fat grub ; another with a snowy beard and the face of an archangelic bishop, studied the tape with the ravenous intensity of a hungry man. From time to time the young man bawled out the price of the more prominent stocks, "MOP," "OLD WOMAN," "GAS," and when the tape slackened in its flow under the crystal dome of the recording instrument, told sto-

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ries of what happened at Mrs. Van Corlear's ball last night and the strange goings-on at Bertie Gansevoort's birthday supper. He drew out a box of plethoric cigars, and offered them to Tyson.

"How are things at the mine, sir?" he asked cautiously.

"Oh, the mine's still underground," Tyson replied, with an impassive face.

Glynne had edged to one of the "tickers," and was spell-bound by a spurt in "Sugar," which rose five points in five minutes and continued to rise. His mental arithmetic could hardly keep pace with the seven league boots of its advance, and the "ticker" was milling gold like a mint for those who had bought or were buying that stock. Five more were added to the five points, and the ten became twenty. Two hundred shares of "Sugar" bought when Glynne and Tyson entered the office would at this moment show a profit of several thousand dollars!

Glynne plucked Tyson by the sleeve and whispered, "Look at Sugar! Why don't you buy Sugar?"

"Come away, Julian. Those little jaws of the ticker bite like a bull-dog, and the poison is more fatal than hydrophobia—I?—Oh, I've been inoculated for it. You've about the same chance of making money playing Poker with the Senator and Nona as you have in this game. Nona's a great sport, is n't she?"

They went out into the noisy street of high buildings, and pushed through the quick-footed, sharp-faced and sharp-witted throng, the raw-voiced newsboys, the catapultic messengers, the scurrying clerks and brokers, the pedlars of cheap wares of all kinds,—shoe-laces, collar-buttons, neck-ties, sandwiches, ice-

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cream, fruit and sausages. The bedouins of that neighbourhood find both raiment and food at infinitesimal cost on the trays and push-carts of the pedlars. Trinity chimes were ringing "Rock of Ages," and the sound splashed down as in a gale of wind and sea, split and torn, but persistent. Half way across the street a crowd of youngish rather shabby men were wrangling and haggling, and occasionally "Sheba" could be heard as hands were thrust out and a rush made towards the centre of the group. They were the curbstone brokers, Tyson explained, and they were trading in "Sheba."

That evening at their hotel, as they were going down to dinner Tyson handed Glynne a check for several thousand dollars. "For profits on Sheba," he said.

"Marvellous!" exclaimed Glynne, with fervour. "You are a magician, Jim. How do you do it? What is the secret?"

"Secret? There's no secret. The way to win in Wall Street is to sell when things are high and buy when things are low. Anybody will tell you that; it's gospel truth, too. Look here, Julian, am I all right?"

Tyson indicated his clothes, about the fit and propriety of which he was solicitous. Glynne as *arbiter elegantiarum* looked him over from head to foot and hesitated. "Well, cream-coloured satin bows are not usually worn with evening dress just now,—not in England; let me lend you one of mine. I do not admire so much jewellery. The diamond *solitaire*, those rings—but it is so much a matter of taste, dear boy. Some of our men have been known to wear bracelets. Look at your Dicky Lansing, and our Lord Aber: they glitter like a perambulating jew-

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eller's show-case. Candidly, much jewellery is bad form. I am sure both Aber and Lansing have the blood of pawnbrokers and ballet girls in their veins."

Tyson laughed. "That's right. Rub it in; that's what I wanted."

The *solitaire* and two of the finger rings were removed, and the satin bow was changed for one of soft white lawn.

They sat down at a table set with silver, snowy damask, and pink roses twined around the pearly globe of an invisible lamp. Tyson knew how to dine, and was unsparing of luxuries; but he paid less heed to the food and wine he provided than to the silent corroboration of the circumstances in which he found himself. There was his friend sitting opposite to him, the brother of a nobleman, who might one day become a nobleman himself. Did the people at the other tables know how notable Glynne was? Or did they take him for an ordinary person? Glynne seemed to fit the surroundings, and not only to participate in their ease and elegance, but to augment those qualities: he made pleasant little epigrams, and once in a while flashed, not obtrusively (that was one of his charms: he never was obtrusive), his persuasive smile across the other tables, where in the soft light and the murmur of many voices there was a generous display of gleaming shoulders and the flicker of jewels and laces. The women glanced at him, and Tyson compared him with the other men present, none of whom had the same charm, the same distinction—distinction, that was the word to denote him—the distinction of noble descent, the repose and grace of an ancient and confident aristocracy. Tyson's pride in him sweetened the food and quickened

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the wine ; he glowed with a satisfaction ineffable as compared with any other results his prosperity had so far given him.

As they sat down to their coffee and cigars in the smoking-room a weakly youth with a slack figure and a vacuous face, came to Glynne with a friendly recognition which Glynne confronted with a measured reciprocity.

“Ah, Goggles !” he said.

“Anything new ?” said “Goggles.”

“How very young you are, and always were, Goggles ! The fatuity of finding anything new in this world !”

“Our new piece ; that’s new. Have you seen it ?”

“No, thank Heaven ! Is it doing well ?”

“Ah, ah ! Bally good, but business is tottery, tottery.”

“Goggles” faded away to his own table.

“What sort of a freak is that ?” Tyson inquired. “Is that what you call an Anglomaniac ?”

“‘Goggles ?’ Oh, he was a schoolmate of mine at Haileybury. He’s on the variety stage now : does a comic dance in the musical piece at the ‘Shooting Star Theatre.’ You must have heard of him ; the Earl of Margate.”

“That the Earl of Margate ! Are there any more like him ?”

“A few. Ah, Tyson, we are not all you think we are. You will be disappointed when you find us out, and you will come back a radical and a democrat. Had n’t you better stay at home and dream your dreams ?”

The next day Tyson sailed, and before the gang-

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ways were swung ashore Glynne grasped both his hands and thanked him.

“What a friend you are, Jim! I cannot think or speak of your goodness to me without—” Glynne’s voice trembled, and a glistening in his eye completed the meaning of the words.

“Well, you know what you are to do if you want to please me. Come over soon.”

The flowers in the saloon were banked on tables, chairs, and buffets.

“I guess yours is the finest piece we’ve got, sir,” a steward said to Tyson, and there, opposite the place in which Tyson was to sit, rose a pyramid of blue violets, its apex sprinkled with snow in the form of white violets. It was *Manaña*, the Mountain of Tomorrow, *Manaña*, in all the glory of evening, sloping from the sky in shining folds of violet shot with gold, as he had seen it a thousand times.

As Tyson bent over it to breathe its fragrance, and saw Nona’s card knotted to the base by a red-white-and-blue ribbon, the old ties wrung him, and something in his throat had to be gulped down. How the sun was beating on old *Manaña* now, and how endless the plains were, and how free the wind! He looked at his watch, and knew just what everybody was doing out there at that hour: he could see the dear old Senator, and a Nona perfected in the glamour of retrospect. Yearnings, regrets, and a desire to retreat and return possessed him, and clogged him like a dragging, cumbrous pall. He strove against himself, and protested his folly, but could not shake off the heaviness. Sandy Hook was astern, and the steamer with her whistle shrieking was reeling towards the lightship between the hollows and ridges of seas of

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deepening green plumed with white and smoking with mist. The moisture dripped from the awnings and gathered in beads on the walls of the deckhouses and shook along rail, stanchion, shroud and stay. An all-encompassing, obliterating fog was spreading its phantom wings out of the East, whither Tyson was bound.

After watching the huge ship glide from her wharf into the river with the smoothness and ease of a seabird on a summer sea, Glynne made his way to the Battery, and there gazed after her down the beautiful harbour (poetic still despite its commercial disfigurement) until she was lost behind the curtain of her own wreathing and engorging smoke. He missed Tyson at once, and his heart drooped in the void. With him emotion and sentiment seldom failed to answer the summons of proper occasions, and then his cynicism dwindled to a matter of fashion, like the cut of a coat, or a playful foil to the platitudinous and the obvious.

What an extraordinary person Tyson was, to be sure!—half lyrical cavalier, and half—well very plain Western American, full of errors of manner, but with few or no errors of fundamental taste. And what an expedition he was now bent on in returning to his native shores, the ragged hungry youth who went away empty and in tatters, coming back in cloth of gold to mingle with the exalted and dwell with them, and perhaps to even patronize them as the incense of novelty spent itself. Apart from his personal charm, which might not be generally or immediately recognized, Tyson had sufficient wealth and sufficient liberality in using it to take his stand in that depleted

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and needy London world which Glynne himself knew to be unresisting to any contagion of riches and indulgent to the bearer of any earthward divining rod, regardless of his remote antecedents. His sponsorship—the introduction of the Langdales—retained its value moreover, and that endorsement Julian had given to Tyson freely. Lord Langdale had not been very friendly with Julian lately, but if his elder brother failed in courtesy Julia, his sister, Lady Cheam,—dear, silly, soft little Julia!—when had he ever asked her to do anything for him that she (even though refusing at first) had not finally yielded? Many times in the exigencies of his career he had been driven to solicit her for more trying services than being kind to such a man as Tyson. Tyson's sister might be an embarrassment, as women often are to advancing men, but it was ten to one that he would never find her, and that would be lucky for him.

Not even the smoke of the departing steamer now remained; she had passed into the hidden circle of the outer bay; but Glynne still lingered on the granite sea wall fringing the little park on the tip of the city's tongue, which in old knickerbocker days was a fashionable promenade. Like all places where there are ships, the Battery, as it is called, is a good place for dreaming, and Glynne's reverie flowed with the tide and took him musingly back over his recent experiences and beyond.

He had not lied to Tyson about himself, and the story of his search for the mine which led to his collapse on the Manaña trail and his discovery by Nona, stood in every detail as he had told it. He had even in a superfluity of candour revealed to Tyson that his

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visit to the pueblo country had its motive partly in the effort to escape the unhappiness of a foolish misadventure with a woman, and the recollection of his confession imparted to him for a moment the glow and renovation of a penitent after the ritualistic remission of sins. How weird that meeting with Ethel had been! And how unearthly beautiful she had looked in that white frock in the shadow of those grey walls of the ancient building, less like a woman than a spirit, the old charm of the ethereal, the suggestion of the lily of Astolat, that had once enslaved him, potent in her yet! Should he send for her as she had besought him?

He rose from the bench on which he had been sitting within the splash of the curling water churning in the rubble; he could not keep still as that idea simmered in him. He passed into the aquarium in the rotunda—once a fort, then a place of public entertainment where Jenny Lind sang, and then (old Castle Garden) the receiving house of newly arrived emigrants. The dim cavernous light depressed him, and the fish gaping and staring sluggishly in the tanks of absinthian green prefigured in his fancy the torpor and indolence of a surfeited socialism.

He returned to the air again, and now Gerald was with him—Gerald, his old friend, and the colonel of his regiment, with whom he had served in Egypt and in Africa. Once again he seemed to feel that friendly hand on his shoulder, and to hear Gerald's grave voice, as he had often heard it, giving brotherly advice. A repugnance to Ethel possessed him, and he resolved that he and she must never meet again. His thoughts and his emotions were as fitful as the changing wind that was driving

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in a chilly sea-fog, but the account he took of himself in his introspection was moderated with apologies and a vicarious shifting of responsibilities which left him undiscouraged and unashamed. The vision of Gerald and Ethel faded like a dissolving view, and he consoled himself with the thought that the scandal that he had flown from would soon lose its poignance and be forgotten or condoned, and London would bow and smile again. What is scandal to-day, he philosophized, is romance to-morrow.

Really, how very penetrating the fog had become ! He would go up to the Waldorf or Delmonico's and see the crowd, dropping in on the way at that broker's office in Wall Street.

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Chapter VII. In the Isle of Wight:

TYSON thought he had never before been in so sunny a room. He recalled the glare that filled the Senator's house at Sheba till four o'clock on summer afternoons, but that was white, and this was golden ; that was painful, this soothing, giving to the body the throb of mellowing fruit. Over the oak floor a great Turkey rug spread its one colour, a willow-like green except along the border, in which it was edged with daffodils and pink carnations, like flowers tossed together without fore-thought by a dreamy weaver who cared not what he was doing. All the chairs and tables and sofas were of white and gold in their framework, and of pink brocade in their upholstery. The lofty ceiling was groined, and gilt chandeliers hung from it in the shape of leaf and blossom. Wherever the eye rested it discovered something rare and beautiful—miniatures and precious books on elaborately carved and inlaid consols ; jars of wrought bronze and iridescent porcelain, filled with flowers and ferns ; dream-like pictures woven in tapestry ; and landscapes and portraits, several of the latter, both those of men in military and naval

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uniforms, and those of the women in the costumes of various historical periods from the Restoration down, recalling Julian Glynne to Tyson by resemblances more or less subtle.

One pink lady in particular in a many-pleated farthingale, with a peaked and much embroidered bodice, and a ruffled cloud of lace at her neck, and masses of golden ringlets puffed out from her temples, looked down upon him with the appealing smile that he remembered so well in his absent friend.

But it was not the beauty and luxury of the furnishings that impressed Tyson and filled him with pervasive delight ; it was the airiness and fragrance of the room, which seemed more like a pavilion out of doors than part of an interior. All the long French windows were open, and the bland summer wind blew in, bearing bees, butterflies, and all the scents of the garden. Roses and honeysuckle peeped in around the sashes and swung their sprays in the breeze.

Out of a window Tyson could see a long vista of beeches leading to the tennis courts, with the sunlit space between arcaded by rambler roses. On one hand a cultivated wood like a green cloud clung to the ramparts of a white cliff, and on the other a succession of terraces with carved balusters, vases and statues, led down to such a splendour and opulence of bloom and verdure as the south of England alone can show. Out of another window he saw through occasional clearings in the close-set foliage of beech, birch, ash and chestnut, the shimmering roofs of an embowered village and the spire of a red-tiled village church.

The house was placed high up on the cliff, midway

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between the softly swelling downs on the summit and the white-feathered foreshore of sandy beach and rocky bay. That great plain of turquoise on which rose leaves seemed to have drifted was the Channel, and those faint lily-like columns raised upon it were the full-bosomed ships in the offing, making for Beachy Head or St. Catherine's Point.

The golden glow stole through Tyson's veins, and he grew elate in response to the goodness of the world, especially the goodness of this bit of the world called the Isle of Wight, into which he had dropped by the inevitably belated train from London last night.

He had been too late for dinner, and after a few words with Lady Cheam, and some embarrassment and confusion in the presence of other guests who were too preoccupied to pay any attention to him, he had followed the hierarchical butler to his bedroom, from which he had just now descended with a sense of shyness and a new perception of the accord between luxury and dignity.

The quietude of the morning in the halls, in the breakfast-room, and in this beautiful drawing-room facing the sea, weighed a little solemnly upon him : he had heard no human voices except the monosyllables of the valet who had set out his clothes for him and prepared the bath in his room. Only the birds were noisy, and he could hear the confident little English robins piping antiphonies to the blackbirds of robuster notes. Once in a while the sea drew a deeper breath, and its throb rose against the cliff and boomed.

The spell was to be broken, however, by the appearance of Lady Cheam, for whom he was waiting,

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as all who had appointments with that lady of unpunctuality were in the habit of doing, peevishly or patiently, according to their dispositions and their objects.

In she came with a flutter of lace and silk and the odour of heliotrope, and Tyson in the freshness of his new flannels, and with his eyes gleaming behind his strong glasses, hurried to meet her from the window where he had been watching a fearless robin hopping about the sill.

Lady Cheam, with a strong family likeness to the other pink lady in the portrait, was small, plump and round, with an air of infantile simplicity and confidence. As a prelude to conversation she smoothed her skirts by two affectionate pulls at them, turned her head from right to left with a bird-like undulous swing, folded her small childish hands in her lap, and then opened on Tyson an archly coquettish smile, lips apart and eyebrows raised, all these movements being intended as intimations that reserve was lifted, and the path clear for mutual confidences.

Being without any gift of reticence whatever, her ladyship flattered herself, in the way of her kind, that she was the soul of discretion; she pleaded the decency of taciturnity as an old-fashioned virtue now lapsing, and forthwith emptied to the last drop her confused secretions of hearsay and knowledge on the many she chose as fitting and worthy receptacles.

“Come and sit down, and we’ll have a long chat, a really delicious and long chat,” she said, beckoning Tyson to a chair, separated from her own only by a little mosaic table loaded with small pictures and small books, and a jar of drying rose leaves.

“It’s such a comfort to be alone with somebody

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one can really talk to," she continued rapidly, with the most expansive sigh Tyson had ever heard, a sigh in which she and he and the room itself seemed to suspire.

"One's friends are so good, and yet they do bore one, do they not? That is one of my theories, and I know it is unfeeling and unchristian, and perhaps it is not quite what I mean; but they do, don't they? I like excitement, and goodness is never really exciting, is it? No, never! Or perhaps I should say, seldom. It's such a comfort to see a new face, and that from America! So kind of you to come, and so soon after landing! Now, as I say, we must have a talk, and you must tell me all about Julian. You Americans—"

"No, no, Lady Cheam, I'm not an American. Didn't Julian tell you? I was born in England," he declared, glancing at the fair picture out of the windows, which thrilled him by the sense of some inheritance in its beauty.

"Of course, of course! How stupid of me to forget! Julian did tell me all about you, and what a wonderful career you have had. It's nice to think that you are English, though you do n't look it at all. Perhaps," she continued, after pondering mysteriously, "we'd better not mention it—for reasons of diplomacy."

"Reasons of diplomacy? I do n't understand, Lady Cheam," said Tyson.

"Oh, they always like you better and do more for you if they think you are American. It's absurd, and quite wrong, I know, but we are ever so much more indulgent to Americans who come over than we are to our own people—ah, that is, to people of

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the same kind. You need n't explain things if you are an American ; it is quite natural for you to be what you are. Oh, I assure you you can be anything and do anything over here if you are an American," she declared.

Tyson smiled and shook his head. "I am what I am, and I guess they'll have to take me at that, or not at all."

He unhooked his heels and straightened himself.

"I am a plain man, Lady Cheam. Julian ought to have told you."

"How clever you are, and what a brilliant success you have made!" He did."

"No family ; no university ; no connections."

"How wonderful!"

"And did he tell you about my sister ?" he asked. "I've started another search for her—it was the first thing I did when I landed."

"Yes ; and we are going to help you to find her. She must come and pay me a long visit. You are splendid, really you are!"

"Oh, no. There are lots of fellows like me, and many more deserving, who have not had my success. I can't say I'm ashamed of myself in any way, but I should n't like people to think me better than I am, or take me for what I don't pretend to be. These people in the house—they know?"

"You'll find them charming, and they will be delighted with you. You undervalue yourself, my dear Mr. Tyson—that is what Julian said : he said you were as modest as a girl, though that was only an expression, for girls are not modest nowadays, are they ? So different from what they were when I was a girl."

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Tyson was an unpractised judge of women's ages; Lady Cheam was fair and pink and vivacious, and he guessed at fifty. He fumbled for a compliment, but could not find one.

"Oh, I am quite an old woman, really I am," she laughed, in deprecation of the compliment on Tyson's lips but unuttered. "As I was saying, you undervalue yourself. Just think of what you are—like somebody out of the Arabian Nights—who is it? Ali Baba? Aladdin?—who says 'Open Sesame!' and makes everybody rich?"

"Julian has been exaggerating," Tyson demurred. "He always makes more of anything that belongs to me than it is worth. But we have got a good mine, sure, and the future looks all right."

"How very nice! Julian said it was a good mine, a very rich mine. And fancy! It might have been his if—"

"If? His?" Tyson cried, straightening himself again.

"I mean if he had been there a few years earlier, and found it before you did."

"Ah, in that way," he assented, disturbed but incapable of being exacting with a lady whose unreasonableness and in consequence were part of her charms.

She was tilting the lace fringe of her gown on the pointed tip of her shining little silver-buckled shoe in an evanescent abstraction, and then once more disturbed him by asking,

"You are quite sure your titles are unassassivable?"

"Unassassivable? Good—Excuse me, Lady Cheam, but you've got me! That is, I don't understand. Unassassivable?"

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She raised her eyes demurely. "Of course I do n't believe a word of it, but a little bird whispered to me that—"

"Forgive me, Lady Cheam, but that bird lied."

"How naughty of him! But I never had much faith in talking birds, they're too human."

She was so intimate that Tyson leaned towards her like a pleading boy. "Who was it?"

"One of you city men."

"I'm not a city man; far from it, Lady Cheam."

"Well, that is what we call them over here. Oh, he has been very, very successful. A year or two ago he was n't worth a penny, and now—everybody is talking of him. He wants to rent this place from us for next year."

"What's his name?"

"You must have heard it—Pewster."

"Pewster, Pewster! Why, that's the fellow that sold Julian—that used to work for us at Sheba!"

Tyson was slow in recovering from his astonishment.

"And has Julian heard of this?" he asked.

"Not yet. I was not aware that Julian knew him, and Pewster has come upon us so suddenly it quite takes one's breath away. Can you tell me what it means? He has 'cornered' something."

"I'd like to corner him. That fellow's not fit to speak to you, Lady Cheam. He's the limit."

"The limit?"

"A superlative blackguard."

"Yes, I see—one of your Americanisms: Pewster's the limit."

She paused a moment and then went on: "But so few of these modern Crœsuses, these Tom Tiddlers,

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are nice: Tom Tiddler's ground always seems so dirty. What can we poor people do? They are crowding us everywhere, but they are certainly useful in many ways, and so hospitable! I promised to not say a word about it, but do you know what he did the other day? I met him at a garden party at Carisbrook, and as we parted he whispered, 'You must take a flyer in Micawbers.' Didn't that sound strange? But I 'caught on,' as you say in America, and I bought a hundred shares of Micawbers—it's a mine, of course, not the Dickens person—and he wrote to me yesterday that he had sold, and that my profits were a cool thousand!"

Her eyes sparkled, and she clapped her little hands like a pleased child.

"You can't say that that was not kind, can you, now?" she proceeded, without waiting for any response from Tyson. "It is quite like conjuring—doing all sorts of things with any kind of thing—the magic hat with the goldfish in it, and rubbing a shilling in the palm and changing it to sovereigns. You can do it, too. Yes, you can! Julian told me so."

Tyson protested uncomfortably. He struggled to reconcile some preconceptions with what he was now listening to. The ground under him, and his surroundings, and Lady Cheam herself, jarred him momentarily, and he was conscious of a slight recoil from some of his illusions. Was this lady of high birth so mercenary? And could any reprobate with sufficient wealth command English society by free living and the tricks of the stock gambler? Was it—he sighed—the same here as in New York, Chicago and San Francisco?

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A man servant with a marble face and cat-like step stole in, and bowed to Lady Cheam.

"The landau for the Bishop at three, Prawle," she said.

"Yes, my lady."

"Tell Wilkins I shall want her to go to Jolliffe's for some books."

"Yes, my lady."

"Lady Romer is coming from town by the 3:10. Send the omnibus to meet her."

"Very good, my lady."

"How is your cold?"

"Much better, thank you very much, my lady."

"Seven for dinner."

"Very good, my lady."

There was a pause.

"Anything else, my lady?" the servant enquired, and receiving a negative answer he bowed lower than before, and with another grateful "Thank you, my lady," stole out as noiselessly as he had come in.

Tyson had been occupied during the episode in a further appreciation of the sedate beauty of the room, with its evidences of permanent and unassertive refinement, and the genuflections of the servant with his melodic obeisance, like that of a priest before an altar, so strengthened the effect of established order and dignity that his faith in the esoteric character of his new environment recovered from the shock of Lady Cheam's volubility.

"Shall we go into the garden? Yes, I think we had better," she whispered significantly, glancing to the other end of the room, where a girl, who had entered unseen, was curled on the floor before an

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old carved oak bookcase, with a crimson volume opened in her lap.

It was the same girl he had been introduced to last night—introduced to with nothing more than a smile, a touch of the hand and a retreat. He could not remember her name now, but how she looked he remembered distinctly—tall and slim as one of those lilies shining in the garden, as tall as he himself was. A very beautiful head she had, and the lightish hair was drawn into a knot behind, though gleaming wisps of it escaped and blew about her forehead as softly as gossamer. Her face was of delicate complexion, with small but strong features: it held in his memory because its changes of expression were so vivid and so opposite, serious and even severe in repose, but suffused, as pity or pleasure moved her, with the glowing sweetness he had seen in white roses. Such a sweetness had come into it while Tyson watched her bantering the Bishop the previous evening—the elderly cleric in knee breeches and broad silk apron; it was a bishop, he inferred—but she had met Tyson with the other look, and a curt “How do you do?” like the frigid greeting of an unfriendly man.

He followed Lady Cheam to the lawn, and surveyed with more leisure than before, and with new delight, the varied charms of the house and its surroundings. Could anything in the world be more beautiful? Sea and land met in the sweet mellow gold drift of the air, and the resplendent gardens and luxuriant woodland swept down to the shore and dipped blossoms and bough in the spray as the long breakers curled in Medusa-like braids among the stones. The lawn was not flat, but was up-

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heaved into many little knolls and hillocks, each ringed by beds of old-fashioned flowers, lobelias, geraniums, larkspur, Canterbury bells, phlox, nasturtiums and mignonette. Wherever the underlying rock cropped out the ivy grappled and covered it, and where there was a hedge it was of hawthorn, of laurel, of myrtle or of the fuchsias which sprinkled the landscape with their crimson showers and soared to the height of trees. Never before had Tyson seen, or breathed, or imagined so many roses : they mantled the front of the house and crept to every window ; ever renewed, their fallen leaves hid the earth at their feet with circlets of jewelled velvet ; supported by frail rods, such of them as stood alone bore breast-high on their fragile stems a cloud of loveliness and fragrance which they held out appealingly to all who passed, as though asking like the bearers of gifts to be relieved of votive offerings ; given a trellis they alternated with the purple of the bougainvillea in walling and arching the cool fragrant arcades on both sides of the lawn.

From the immediate front the house appeared to be set in a dense grove at the top of the slope, but by following Lady Cheam up a zig-zag path to the summit of a knoll Tyson saw that behind the wood the slope rose much higher than the highest trees, and was buttressed by a vertical escarpment before it met the pale and smooth verdure of the downs, which rolled away and vanished against the sky.

The variety of colour and form before him amazed him. A long reach of the coast edged the lavender sea with silvery chalk cliffs, tasselled by the yellow washings of earth ; above the cliffs and between

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them and the downs the scene was wholly sylvan, and the sea a surprise, for here lay valley beyond valley, with meadow and dell, a sprinkling of villages, and a turret or a tower among the tree-tops to denote some great estate or pleasure house. In the villages little thatched cottages abutted with their gardens on narrow lanes deep-sunk between hawthorn, laurel and myrtle hedges and banks of wild flowers.

As he looked on the perfection wrought by the devotion of the home lovers of unnumbered centuries a choking joy welled in him, and an obstinate tear trickled along his lashes. The familiar anthem came back to him—"Give peace in our time, O Lord!"—and there was peace here, and the dreams he had dreamed so often under the glare of the sun at Sheba and on the roof of the old pueblo were dreams no more.

His mood excused what he had been beginning to dislike in Lady Cheam, her tendency to sordidness, and her fluent frivolity. She was bending over a rose bush, and looked easily forgivable at that moment.

"You like Culvercombe?" she said, looking up and seeing the dreamy pleasure in his face. Culvercombe was the name of the estate.

"Like it! That's no word for it."

She smiled. "Lord Cheam loved it, too. Poor dear Cheam!" she continued, in her discursive way, dwelling not too long on a disturbing memory of the departed. "He was in America once, you know, but only for a few months. They sent him to the Embassy at Washington; he was one of the secretaries there—such a clever man! Then something happened. He wrote an article in one of your mag-

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azines on 'The United States as a Menace to Civilization,' and they made such a fuss about it! Your people, I mean. It was most unreasonable, and most unkind. Cheam was never again himself after he came home. But about Julian: do tell me everything."

"Julian's one of the best."

"I like to hear you say that. He is a dear—so handsome, so clever, so good-natured! His good nature has been his ruin—"

She retrieved the last word. "I do n't mean that, but—does he seem happy?"

"I think he 'd like to get back home."

"He must come soon, but for the present there 's a reason."

Tyson nodded, and Lady Cheam questioned him by a shrewd glance.

"He told you. I can see it," she decided.

"Takes it too seriously, I think," said Tyson.

"That 's the dear boy's way! He was duped—yes; duped. She was much older than he was—one of those silly, vain, married creatures one so often sees nowadays, who find flattery in the attention of young men. They are most pernicious! You can understand it, can't you, and look at it like a man of the world?"

In the search for justice Lady Cheam preferred to abide by the decision of a man of the world on her brother, leaving the woman to the ordeal and decree of more precise tribunals. But Tyson's complaisance went so far that it excited some suspicion—for she surmised in him some strength of character and, at a crisis, inflexible rectitude. How much had Julian told, she wondered; and Tyson, suspecting nothing

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from his friend's confidence beyond a light-hearted intrigue, did not understand her when she said, "It was almost like a conspiracy against Julian, and now her husband is dead—but they can't hold Julian answerable for that!"

Tyson's eyes were on the sea and on all the loveliness of the garden and the interlaced, cloud-like, impenetrable foliage. "I'm for Julian now and all time," he declared. "He takes it too seriously. That's what I told him. 'If the world began with one woman it need not end with one,' I said to him when he spoke of the matter to me away out at Sheba."

And it was not without pride that Tyson resuscitated his epigram for Lady Cheam's consolation.

He dipped his nose into the roses and inhaled them; he watched the fleecy clouds, deeper, fuller, more luminous clouds than he had seen in many a day, drifting in snowy masses between the blue of the sky and the blue of the sea; he glanced at the graceful curves of the downs and at the terraced woodlands below them. Perfume filled his nostrils, the murmur of singing leaves and singing birds filled his ears, and the beauty of everything enthralled him.

"And Pewster's to have all this!" he lamented, biting his lip. Then spurred from his reverie by a daring inspiration, he precipitated a question: "Say, Lady Cheam, is that deal closed?"

"I beg your pardon. That deal?"

"That's what we'd call it over there. I mean, have you definitely agreed to let Pewster have the place, or is he merely negotiating for it?"

"Oh, I see! I suppose I must let him have it. He

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makes such a good offer for it. But you can imagine what it is to me to part with it at all." The little lady sighed.

Tyson wheeled over the scene again.

"Let me have it," he cried, after a moment's deliberation. "Yes, I'll take it. I want it; let me take it, and on your own terms, Lady Cheam! You fix the rent, and make the terms to suit yourself. What suits you will suit me—anything you say goes."

He rammed his hands in the pockets of his flannel jacket, and chuckled as might a conqueror who sees in the hollow of his hand a long-desired land that has come to him by surprise. His body drew itself to its fullest height, and he sniffed the air and dilated like a creature of the forest breaking into new and promising ground.

Lady Cheam was bewildered, and faced him dubiously. Then she patted him on the back with her childish little hand and smiled. "You are an American, after all," she said. "Only Americans talk like that and do things in that way."

"But it's a bargain?" he persisted. "It's a bargain, Lady Cheam? It need n't make much difference to you. You can be here as much as you care to—need n't be disturbed in the least, need never know that the place does n't belong to you. And if it can be bought I'll buy it at your own figure. It's a bargain? I'm to have it?" he repeated, with boyish eagerness.

"I must see my solicitor, of course," she answered. "If he approves—"

"He'll approve. I'll see to that," Tyson cried, and in imagination he was already in possession.

"Very well, then. I greet you as lord of the

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manor," replied Lady Cheam, with a mock courtesy, and they shook hands and laughed together.

An afterthought came to Tyson. "How it will surprise Julian!" he said. "But no, we'll not say a word to him about it. He'll come back, and we'll get him to stay here, and he'll never know what we've done. That will be a great joke, eh, Lady Cheam? Ah, dear old chap!" he sighed. "I wish he were here now!"

A gardener touched his hat to Lady Cheam, and drew her attention to one of the greenhouses. "*Au revoir*," she said. "Luncheon at one," giving him a coquettish smile.

He delayed her for a moment. "Have I been crowding you, Lady Cheam?" he apologized.

"Crowding me?"

"Urging you too much."

"Not at all. I like it, and I like you!"

He sauntered back to the house, and looked into the drawing-room where they had left that tall girl poring over the crimson book.

She was gone now, but the book lay in a chair, and near it lay a rose she had been twirling in her fingers. He wondered what the book was about, and unconscious of the strangeness of the impulse, he picked it up and opened it at the title page: the paper was rough-edged and yellow with age, the parchment binding stained and warped. As he put it down again he shook his head sadly, and a shadow of chagrin crossed his face, for the book was in Latin, and he could not read it.

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Chapter VIII. Tyson Dines with Some Fashionable People : : : :

AS Tyson descended the wide, oak stairway into the great hall between the drawing-room and the dining-room his step was slow and reluctant, and he was not sure of himself. The pleasure of the morning and of the afternoon which he had spent on the downs, scouring their hollows and breezy ridges, gave place to an almost intolerable shyness and loneliness, and if he could have found an excuse he would have evaded what was before him.

As it was he edged himself down the last step and into the room in which Lady Cheam and her guests had assembled for dinner. Still he hugged the shadow, and furtively retired to the shelter of one of the buttresses of the canopied marble fire-place, where unseen he looked and listened, and endeavoured to recall to his support some of the precepts Julian had gaily flung to him in his debonair way when they smoked together in the den at Sheba. . . .

That was the Bishop, undoubtedly, the Bishop of Winsbury, a spare, clean-shaven, gentle old man of great urbanity. . . . The middle-aged woman in

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the glittering, brittle jetté dress, which tinkled and sparkled as she moved, she with the long neck and sharply jointed arms strung together with little covering of Nature's or of Fashion's—he surmised that she was Lady Romer. Her face was wedgelike and narrow, and her nose longer and narrower in proportion than her face. Tyson had never before understood the full meaning of a hatchet face. Yes, that was Lady Romer, the wife of the Earl of Romer, who had been prominent on the Conservative side of politics, ex-diplomat, ex-cabinet minister! Her eye caught his in the supercilious glare of her lorgnette, and an anticipatory antipathy shot through him and burned him.

Who was that absurd, slender, pallid man, who wriggled so much, and said things which made them laugh while his own face was so impassive? There were a few others he could not place and was not curious about, but there—there was the tall, fresh, independent, earnest girl of the crimson book, who sped from one to the other, chatting vivaciously with this one and that, and in the intervals falling into that seriousness of expression he had observed before, with a mood as changeable as the surface of a river.

Her seriousness had no asperity in it now, and was without the *hauteur* he had inferred last night. Everybody was intimate with her and called her Mary, a name which he suddenly reminded himself he had always liked for its sweet simplicity. Perhaps it had not been *hauteur* at all: he knew himself to be distraught and capable of misjudging.

Lady Cheam rustled towards him, and seemed to have been watching him, and reading his thoughts.

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“Yes,” she said, “that is the Bishop. Such a dear good creature! He is full of comfort, dear soul, and makes one’s trials and afflictions so bearable that one almost enjoys them.

“I saw that you were looking at *her*,” she ran on, “and you are quite right. That *is* Lady Romer, a cousin of mine. We are nearly all cousins here. I hope you will find her agreeable. She thinks she knows everything, poor dear, and that the Romers are everything. Fancy! Is n’t that ridiculous! And that is Wembley Gleg, a most amusing creature!”

She smiled towards the serpentine man who produced mirth in others without revealing it in himself.

“A dreadful cynic, but very witty. He can be extremely disagreeable, yet see how he makes them laugh! That is why I have him; that is why everybody has him. He writes, too, you know, writes all sorts of things.”

She paused, and bent close to Tyson’s ear. “Ahem!” she whispered. “A word to the wise: they won’t mention Julian, and you need n’t.”

The girl called Mary, with the lively grey eyes and the clear pale face, joined them, and glanced at Tyson inquiringly with that adorable smile of hers. She was not more than twenty-four, he decided, and was dressed in a soft diaphanous grey fabric that hung like a silvery mist over underlying pink silk.

“Do come here, Mary, and talk to Mr. Tyson,” said Lady Cheam. “He has been hiding himself in this corner and quizzing us; I am sure he has,” she added, as she left them alone, without heeding Tyson’s deprecation.

“Yes, let us talk,” assented Mary; “it will be a

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relief. Lady Romer does nothing but talk about state secrets without revealing any, while Mr. Gleg constantly abuses England."

"But is n't he, Mr. Gleg, an Englishman?" Tyson asked.

"I am ashamed to say he is—of a kind. You know it, do n't you? The kind that cultivates as an art the habit of differing with everybody and attacking serious things from the ambush of an affected cynicism. An easy trick that serves as an apology for wit with so many of our coxcombs! I've no patience with it!"

"Yes, that sort of nonsense makes me mad, too," Tyson declared, and then he found her looking at the rose in his button-hole which he had picked up near the crimson book in the morning.

"Anything the matter with it?" he asked.

"It's faded; it looks as if it had a history." She laughed.

"I've been saving it," he admitted.

"Saving it when there are roses everywhere! Ah, there's some story about it," she again laughed. "Tell me what it is."

"Oh, nothing. I found it."

"Found a rose! That's a curious thing to say where roses are abounding. One plucks them, or picks them, unless they are given to one."

"Well, I neither picked nor plucked this one, and it was n't given to me."

She shook her head, and all the loose threads of gold danced along her brow. Her trifling comedy pleased him, and raised his spirits, and he hoped that he would be placed near her at dinner. He would rather have talked to her than to anybody else—he

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was more drawn to her now than he had been before. But when they filed from the hall into the dining-room, and sat down at the glistening table, which was heaped with flowers and tipped with the flames of countless candles showing pale against the splendours of the sunset glow flushing between the edges of the curtains and the mullioned windows, he was placed between Lady Romer and the Bishop, and all he could see of Mary was the top of her shapely head. Lady Cheam beamed encouragement from her end of the table, but in his disappointment he raged against his own dullness and awkwardness, and prayed he might be let alone. Like Sidney Smith when he sat next to a bishop, Tyson crumbled bread, and nervously rolled a little ball between the tips of two of his fingers ; but the isolation he desired was denied.

First the Bishop spoke to him.

“ You are an American ? ”

“ No, sir—English.”

“ Really ? But if they have not assimilated you over there you have at least acquired some of their characteristics. It appears that there are only two nationalities in that great country which resist assimilation, and strange to say, they are as wide apart as the English and the Chinese. How do you account for that ? ”

Tyson laughed. “ I guess that ’s so. I guess it ’s because they both have a fixed idea of getting home at last, and being buried there.”

The serpentine man had been listening, and drawled.

“ Well, that is one thing England can do for her people, bury them ; and that perhaps is our only ex-

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tenuation. You who have breathed the fine air of America, Mr. Tyson, how can you endure this pot-man's paradise, the only land in which public conveyances measure their distances from public house to public house?"

That was true, Tyson admitted to himself, remembering that the painted tariff of fares in many of the 'buses was scaled from tavern to tavern, from the "Eyre Arms" to the "Prince of Wales," and so on.

"Why do you put up with it?" Tyson said pointedly. "If a man in America talked like that about America—"

"Oh, we have ceased to be sensitive in England. What right has a prosperous, gin-drinking nation to be sensitive? Look at the advertisements in the daily papers, in which taverns are recommended for sale in 'prosperous gin-drinking neighbourhoods,' and as far as I can make out there are few neighbourhoods which do not claim this distinction."

Mr. Gleg sipped his champagne nonchalantly, and Tyson looked up and down the table listening for some remonstrance. It came from Mary, who reached from behind a cluster of roses with a swift glance at him as she spoke. The others appeared to be far from resentful.

"He addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words," she said. "Why not rise to the occasion, and take some settlement work in a gin-drinking parish. I can find a place for you."

"To deprive the people of their chief pleasure? No, I'll not do that. I believe in the liberty to be clean and the liberty to be dirty, the liberty to drink

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and the liberty to abstain, and in all liberties, Mary, except that of perverting the scriptures against an old friend. Job was ill-used by Elihu in that quotation of yours ; but you church people drive your texts both ways, head first or tail first, either way so that they move to suit you.”

“A text must be able to kick or bite to make any impression on you.”

“Oh, I don’t know about that, but a text is invariably a dilemma with two horns as some people use it.”

“And the horns are only long enough to match the ears of the scoffer,” she retorted.

Another of Tyson’s preconceptions was undermined. There was less decorum and formality than he had expected in the presence of the Bishop. He found him amused rather than offended ; and then he turned to him and said,

“That’s a smart girl. I’d have liked to tackle that fellow myself, but I couldn’t have done it as well as she did. Somehow she seems like an American girl.”

“Why do you think that ?”

“Well, she’s so outspoken, so able to take care of herself.”

The Bishop smiled. “She is a clever girl, and she is very useful to me. Cambridge has done so much for our girls, Oxford so little.”

“Indeed ! She’s a college girl, is she ?” Tyson asked, wondering what her relationship to the Bishop was, that he could so describe her value to him.

“She took a first class at Newnham, and I may say that it has not spoiled her in the least.”

“No, sir, it has n’t, not a bit,” and Tyson agreed

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with so much emphasis that the Bishop lifted his eyes and moved in his chair.

“I am old-fashioned. I cannot bear pedants in petticoats, and so few women are able to fill their heads and preserve their charm—to climb the tree of knowledge and come down without all sorts of burrs and prickly things clinging to their garments.”

“I quite agree with you, my—my lord,” Tyson assented, so ingratiated by the Bishop that the form of deference now came easily and naturally. “And that Mr. Gleg,” he continued, with increasing confidence; “Lady Cheam tells me he’s an author. What has he written?”

“I do not read what he writes, but I am told it is very clever. His latest book is called, I understand, ‘The Autobiography of a Monkey.’”

The occasion was irresistible for Tyson, and he laughed. “Ah, ah—personal reminiscences, eh?”

But to this the Bishop did not respond. “Really we are scandalous, talking of our neighbours in this way. Shall we change the subject?”

He turned to the high complexioned man opposite to him, whom he addressed as Sir Walter, and Tyson again became a listener and a crumbler of bread. He wished those flowers were out of the way so that he might see Mary, but he could only hear her voice as she talked with the cleric who sat on her left.

The conversation drifted away from him into subjects that he did not care for, or on which he was uninformed—Dante, the Royal Academy, the traditions of the Roman pontificate, the aims of positivism, Sara Bernhardt and the Gaelic League. Lady Cheam tinkled through it with tireless irrelevance, like a meddlesome child, contributing nothing and taking

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nothing away ; Gleg shot his arrows with languid impartiality in both directions ; the Bishop argued mildly but without yielding, and Sir Walter chafed against death duties and socialism. What was debatable Mary stood ready to debate. Apparently there were few things on which she did not have an opinion, and instead of being challenged or bantered or humoured, as other women at the table were, she was listened to deferentially as she explained herself with a quiet, soft-voiced persuasiveness and reasonableness that led to what in Tyson's conviction was the core and essence of the irrefragable.

He was spell-bound as he listened, she was so wise and so well-read ; but his appreciation of her reacted in a flush of shame and anger against himself for his own ignorance.

Not without pride, and not without moderate self-esteem, Tyson was one of those rare human beings to whom conspicuousness is a pain, and could he have chosen he would subsided into mere listener through the rest of the dinner ; but Lady Romer now broke in upon him from her trusses and tressels of sinew, with a voice that sounded like the dry clutter of a hen. All of it came from the roof of her mouth and was delivered in a hard staccato without vibration. She grated on him like the rasping of a file.

“ So you are *not* an American, though Lady Cheam gave me the idea that you were. I detest Americans. Lord Cheam was quite right about them—they are a menace to civilization. They thrust themselves everywhere, and vulgarize the very air. I mean those common people who come over every summer. There are a few decent ones, of course, but they are so few. Most of the men are like

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bagmen, and the women!—like *cocottes* when they are young, and like scarecrows when they are old. Then that silly fiction of their dressing well! I can't expect you to appreciate that, but they are to any person of taste the worst dressed women in the world. They choose their fashions from the streets and the *cafés chantant*, and the more monstrous the fashions are the more eager they are to follow."

"I'd never notice that," said Tyson drily and solemnly—"noticed the dress, I mean; not in my line, that, Lady Romer, and as for the people, I never noticed the air, except that it always seemed clean and fresh to me. I've got a good many friends out there, you see, and I may be partial. A man never knows what a woman's dress is, anyway—he only feels it, I guess, as an intangible quality that repels or draws him, and fuses with the personality of the wearer."

Mary's rose silk and Lady Romer's own costumes were at that moment in the balance of his eye. He was conscious of floating into deep waters.

"Some English girls do dress nicely," he continued, with emphasis, as the balance fell in the direction of the tulle and rose pink.

Meanwhile Lady Romer observed him with ominous severity. "You know Washington?" she asked.

"Not so well now as I expect to do. My partner is in the Senate—Senator-elect, that is."

"Then you know New York—the Kill von Kulls, the Gansevoorts, the Spuyten Dyvils?"

"No, I don't know them—all I know of New York is Wall Street, three good theatres, and two good restaurants."

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“And your Senate—is it as corrupt as ever? I heard the other day that one man, not a Senator himself, boasted he could ‘swing’ twenty-eight votes, whatever ‘swing’ means. I infer it means control.”

“Do n’t know anything about that twenty-eight, Lady Romer. I should not care to take that job myself unless I wanted to swing myself farther than I care to go, and as for *my* Senator! The fellow that tried to swing him or his vote would n’t know what had happened to him.”

“Ah, well, there’s one thing we are spared. Our men who are foolish or penniless may go over there for their wives, but we have n’t come to the pass yet of marrying our girls to their men. Their women can be taught. Look at Lily Ponsonby, whose grandmother was a laundress, and at Grace Biddulph, whose grandfather made glue! They are almost as real as stage duchesses, but the men—ugh! Always low comedians, with irreverence for wit and bustle for manners. If our English girls ever come to marrying such as these, with their shopmen’s aprons visible through their frock coats—ugh!”

The conversation shifted again, and Lady Romer sat as grim as ever. From time to time Tyson noticed that she shrugged her shoulders, and he suspected that it was at his pronunciation of certain words. At last she corrected him flatly.

“Peters—ham,” he said.

“Peter—sham,” she insisted.

“The village is called after its church, which is St. Peter’s. Ham is the same as hamlet, or village, that’s sure, so it’s Peter’s ham,” he contended.

The tip of Lady Romer’s nose nearly reached her chin as it lengthened.

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“Reason is altogether on your side, Mr. Tyson,” Mary declared.

“That leaves him in the wrong,” said Gleg. “There is no reason in English pronunciation, only idiotic distortion.”

The ladies retired into the drawing-room, and the Bishop turned to Tyson and soon drew him by sympathy into a revelation of his dream of England, and into a confession of all the fond anticipations that had been so long cherished and so long delayed in his Western life. His enthusiasm ignited a responsive glow in the Bishop’s eye, and that ardour of Tyson’s transfigured for the present not only the land but the people and their condition, not only England but everything English, except Gleg and Lady Romer.

“No, no,” said the Bishop, with a wistful smile, “I cannot agree with you in all that. I wish that our hope for ourselves could be as ample as is your faith in us, but the golden age is not yet, not yet! Our people are a gentle, simple people, and steadfast, but alas! as steadfast in their vices as they are in their virtues. The country? Yes, our rivers, our fields, our woods, our birds, our skies—I have seen much of the world, but no such rural beauty as we have here. The cathedrals! There you touch my heart. They are one of our greatest inheritances, one of the priceless gifts of the past to the present, priceless not only for what they are historically and architecturally, but also as towers that speak to towers and answer hope with the joy of faith. Even now when I have my own cathedral I cannot see one of them even in passing—Lincoln over the fens, Ely on its mound, York from the train

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—that my heart does not come into my mouth and repeat the emotion I had in my holiday pilgrimages to them when I was a poor curate in Lancashire.

“And by the way, you must let me have the pleasure of showing you Winsbury while you are here. Come in the morning, and spend the day. Or, better still, come in the afternoon, and spend the night. I’ll speak to my niece about it. You can agree on a date between you. Since my wife died I should have been a lonely old man but for Mary.”

Thus Tyson discovered that Mary was the Bishop’s niece, and by the time he got to his bed-room he knew that her full name was Mary Leigh. It tangled itself with all his thoughts and imaged itself in glimpses of strong and cool grey eyes with dark intensified rings in them ; in a face delicate, smooth and pale, but warm ; in a white forehead rippled with mischievous loose wisps of fine shining hair ; and in a tallish frail figure draped in that soft stuff which gave the effect of pink blossoms bathed in the morning’s dew and mist.

He drew a chair up to the low window and without lighting the candles sat there in a reverie, looking over the tree-tops to the sea, along which the red and green steering lights and the white mast-head lights of the ships were strung like beads between the two head-lands. Now and then a passenger steamer from India or America made itself known by a trellis of electricity as radiant as a multitudinous town. The air was full of the sleepy sounds and odours of drowsy flowers, the crisping of the surf on the shore, the chafing of leaves and bending boughs, and the chime of a distant clock.

Tyson’s memory went back to a time when he

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dreamed of the universities as little Jude did on the red-roofed barn of Thomas Hardy's story, and fretting under his inadequacy and ineligibility, he recalled as applicable to himself advertisements he had seen in some of the newspapers: "A young man whose education has been neglected desires private lessons from an experienced tutor."

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Chapter IX. In which Tyson Looks for Mary : : : : : :

WHEN he awoke in the morning Tyson resolved to "buck up" and to "keep his end up," as his thought shaped itself in the familiar phrases, and not to give way to any lurking suspicions of inferiority. To be of obscure origin and "self-made" could not be so much of a handicap in these days of predominant commercialism—Julian had emphasized that—and his wealth and the ease with which he could add to it endued him with a potency equal to that of others like Sir John Titter and Dicky Lansing, who had not found it difficult to allay the prejudices and surmount the barriers of caste and fashion. He would show them what he could do—great things were possible with Sheba—and one of the first to benefit should be Lady Cheam, who would not be likely to make any secret of what those who were friendly to Jim Tyson might expect from him.

Not in his own conceit, but without consciousness, Tyson was the soul of generosity, and where-

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ever he happened to be he was full of the inspiration of benevolence, planning and doing kindly deeds as freely, as often, and as habitually as other men dwell on what is only their own advantage. Nor was it ordinarily for the glory of it, or from the reckless lavishness of superfluity, that this generosity sprang: it was the spontaneous habit and expression of his nature.

Now, however, and perhaps for the first time in his life, his bountiful impulses in their comprehensive intention were vitiated in some degree by the reckonings of vanity and self-interest. Contrary to his habit, he revelled in thoughts of display, and as he was drawn again and again from his dressing table to the window in his inability to keep away from the shining beauty of sea and land in their aureate glow, and he hummed one of Tennyson's songs—"There are no maids like English maids"—he planned the things he would do to prove that it was a good thing to be on the right side of Jim Tyson.

What did he care anyhow for what the people thought of him? A few such dinners and suppers as he would give at the Carlton, the entertainments he would arrange at Culvercombe with Lady Cheam's aid, the "tips" he could distribute like crumbs to hungry birds to those who wanted them—they'd all, even that snob, Lady Romer, find it to their advantage in the end to be civil enough to Jim Tyson.

As for Lady Romer, he resolved that the next time he met her he would give her some tough Indian names to pronounce, and see whether she could manage them as well as he did Petersham,

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which he still clung to in his pique as Petersham.

Against this bristling egotism another mood of normal modesty impinged and a nobler, quieter attitude attended the thought of Mary Leigh. What did *she* think of him? What would *she* think if the flamboyance of the earlier moment could penetrate in its arrogance the orbit of her calm and high ideals? Tyson was ashamed of himself, and he put before all other considerations a course for himself that should have her appraisal and sanction. What could he do to benefit her in any way, or to propitiate her in any degree—"tips," dinners, gifts? He scorned the fatuity of the thought, and all his resources seemed as unavailing and as inadequate as unworthy offerings scattered on the altar of an irresponsible deity.

The Bishop was leaving for Winsbury a week later, and early in the morning the waggonette that was to take him to Ventnor awaited him on the porch. When Tyson went downstairs the Bishop himself was in the hall, hat on, and Mary, taking the work of the servants into her own hands, was placing the luggage, fragmentary and split into small parcels (one of them in ragged brown paper), under the seats and on the box.

"What have you got in that?" she demanded severely, pointing to the brown paper parcel.

"That? Why, I have really forgotten what is in it, dear," the Bishop replied absently.

"His lordship packed that himself, miss," whispered one of the servants apologetically.

"Good gracious! Have n't I always told you that you must *not* pack things yourself!" she protested,

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scrutinizing the bundle and feeling its weight. "Sermons?" she whispered laughingly, in the Bishop's ear, in a voice not to be overheard. "Let us see."

The string was untied, and the contents of the brown paper revealed—the silver and glass fittings of a dressing-bag, wrapped in a pair of Episcopal stockings. The Bishop clasped his hands before him and smiled the dubious smile of a child who trusts that the issue of a blunder may not be without the extenuation of humour.

"And what have you done with the dressing-bag itself?" cried Mary, with ominous lips, as she pounced upon that article and opened it. Stowed within was a pair of stout Episcopal shoes, very white with the dust of yesterday.

"Yes, yes, there they are, to be sure," said the Bishop blandly. "You see, I had overlooked them, and there was just enough room for them there."

Mary dusted the interior of the bag with excessive vigour, and blew away from her eyes the loose coils of hair that escaped under the brim of her sailor hat.

Was she going too? Tyson asked himself uneasily and anxiously. The modesty and diminutiveness of the luggage persuaded him to dispel that fear, however; it had no signs of the expansive preparations for all emergencies with which a woman defends herself for travel.

He had been unobserved, but now Mary saw him standing in the doorway, and smiled.

"Lock up your valuables, Mr. Tyson," she said, "but if you lose anything, come to me, and we can

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probably find it at Winsbury. Uncle is n't a kleptomaniac, but he is very absent-minded, and when he is leaving a house, and is allowed to do his own packing, strange things sometimes happen. These are his own shoes, and this is his own dressing bag, but I am ashamed to say that I cannot answer for what may be in the other bundles. In his absent-mindedness he sometimes picks up trifles that do not belong to him—do n't you, dear?—and though he has no felonious intention and we always restore them to the owners when we find them, even restitution becomes embarrassing.

Tyson was amazed at her audacity with the Bishop, and his smiling complaisance.

“Come, come, Mary, you are leaving me without a shred of character. You must admit that I oftener leave my own things behind than take others. My gloves and umbrellas—”

“Yes, you do leave those behind, dear, but nobody could possibly want them.”

She made a wry face at the baggy umbrella which he carried under his arm, and when she glanced at his shabby gloves he pretended to hide them behind his back. Then she took his hands and swung them to and fro, and looked fondly into the gentle old face. “Never, never mind. You always leave one thing behind that is worth having, do n't you?”

“And what is that?”

“Sweetness, of course,” she declared.

The Bishop was touched by a childish shyness as he shook his head, and said, “Ah, I ought to be more watchful of that than of my old gloves and umbrellas, and take it with me wherever I go.”

“I guess you've got enough of that to go round,

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Bishop," Tyson interposed. "You may take it away, but you leave it behind, too."

The Bishop rewarded him with a not displeased glance and then looked at his watch.

"Why, I have missed my train. Have we time to catch it, Hopkins?" he asked the man on the box.

"I'm afraid not, my lord," the servant replied.

"Well, after all, it doesn't matter. Now I have an inspiration. I will let Hopkins take the luggage down to Ventnor and see it labelled, and you and I, Mary, can walk over the downs and meet the train at Wroxall. Will you do that, dear? There's nothing to prevent you? Mr. Tyson, what do you say? Will you come with us? This morning air is worth far more than the valuation Keats put on it—sixpence a pint!"

Tyson's gothic face, with the round eyes gleaming under his glasses, turned eagerly to Mary's, which met his without encouragement.

"Mr. Tyson has not had his breakfast, yet," she said.

"Yes, I have—that is, all the breakfast I want. Certainly I'll go."

"Ridiculous!" said Mary sharply. "I won't consent to it. You must have your breakfast."

"I don't care for it. Out West we often go without breakfast."

"But not here. I won't have it. No, you must not come. I refuse to have you—it's folly."

"Well, I'll have a cup of tea and follow you—if you do n't mind. May I do that?"

"If you'll give me your word that you will eat your breakfast properly, and not hurry, you may

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follow us. There! Perhaps we'll meet half way as I come back."

Even this compromise was delightful to Tyson, and "half way" with her more alluring than the full distance elsewhere.

The waggonette having started for Ventnor, he watched the Bishop and Mary depart by a winding path which led by the back of the house over knolls of laurel and glossy holly, through rose-wreathed arcades and terraced gardens to the face of the cliff, which dropped behind the foliage like a crumpled satin curtain. The precipice was as sheer as a cañon wall, but instead of being basalt or sandstone it was chalk of a bluish yellow, sprinkled with the scarlet of drifted poppies. Steps had been quarried in the face of it, and he watched the two diminishing figures, one in black and the other in flowery muslin, surely and quickly toiling upward until they were high above the topmost boughs of the soaring trees. Once the figure in white paused and rested alone in a natural alcove framed in ivy, and it looked to him like the image of a saint. Then both disappeared through a tangle of hawthorn which edged the road skirting the base of the swelling, treeless, cloud-like downs.

Tyson chuckled as they vanished, for while he had been talking to Mary the Bishop had gone indoors for some inevitably forgotten possession, and had come back with Tyson's brand-new umbrella under his arm in place of his own, which still lay on one of the hall chairs.

Faithful to his word, Tyson helped himself from the dishes in the silent breakfast-room, and poured out a cup of tea. He did not care for the food, but

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he did not hurry—the toast seemed a little bitter, the marmalade too sweet, the tea tasteless. “I knew I had no appetite,” he said to himself, pushing the dishes from him, but for all that he was not going to press too closely after Mary and the Bishop.

Perhaps she did not want him at all, and he had been intrusive. What a girl she was, anyhow! As simple and as unaffected as Nona, and yet behind all the naturalness revealed in the playfulness of her speech and manner, and in the motherly protectiveness of her attitude towards her uncle, were the attainments of a scholar who had taken a “first-class” at Newnham—a prodigy of feminine modesty and unspectacled erudition! There was not a bit of pose about her, and no ostentation of any kind, and yet the look in her eyes that he had observed when she was introduced to him somehow gave him the idea that she had moods in which she might be aloof and inaccessible.

Lighting a cigar, and carrying the Bishop’s baggy umbrella with him, Tyson leisurely ascended the zig-zag steps at the back of the house, and when he emerged on the highway at the top he found a rustic stile in the hedge, by which access was given to the downs. Bare of foliage and of other vegetation than clumps of gorse and heath, and soft, springy turf, they rose like the steep slopes of an “open” cañon, their soft yellowy green surface hanging like an interminable curtain before his upraised eyes. The sea wind blew strong across them, its droning now pierced by the scream of gulls, and then interlaced by the bleating of sheep. Not till he reached the summit of the seaward slopes could their true conformation be seen, and there they became visible as a series

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of dome-like hills, each swelling into the other, with farms and villages and woods tucked away in the shallows between them. In their smooth convexity they extended east and west from Culver cliff to the Needles, and were repeated in the dim distance for leagues and leagues, ending only where a pale blue flash of water, flecked with the sails of yachts and ships, marked the boundaries of the triangular island. Flowing in their contours, and less heavy than earth, they indeed seemed like sleeping clouds reposing in the glow of the sun, and likely to drift away with the virgin white and silver masses that dreamed in the azure over them. On the south they faced a drowsy sea spreading to the horizon a floor of turquoise inlaid in the shallows and shadows with patches of amethyst and sapphire.

From below any figure appearing against the skyline upon the ridge of the downs assumed gigantic proportions but upon the downs themselves it diminished in the openness of space to less than its natural size. When he had looked up from the road Tyson had seen two or three such exaggerated figures stalking forth like giants, but now no human being was visible, nor hut, nor cottage, nor shelter, in all the sweep of undulous land, except the hamlets and farms in the hollows, nor were there any clear cut paths to index Wroxall, or lead the way to that village, or to distinguish it from the other villages in distant view.

The clairvoyant instinct of the trail revived in him, and he stooped over and studied the loose chalk and the fine turf for the sufficiently different imprints of such shoes as Mary's and the Bishop's. The act set his mind whirling among other days and other scenes,

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but adept as he was, it was without profit and he laughed at himself for the obvious futility of his experiment. Then a plume of white streaming from a dark gap in one of the creases of the hills and a faint reverberation of vibrating metal indicated a railway, and he went in that direction, and found Wroxall without finding Mary.

A porter at the little station had seen his lordship go by "the 9.53," and the young lady had walked to the cottage yonder, Mrs. Yelf's "her as sold sweets and tobacco and afternoon teas."

Mrs. Yelf's cottage, with its thatched roof and its little garden gay with sunflowers, tiger lilies, nasturtiums, phlox, geraniums, roses, hollyhocks, and sweet-williams, would have made a pleasing resting-place to Tyson's mind, at any time, and he now entered the gate with double zeal. Mrs. Yelf herself sat on a bench in a miniature rustic porch up the sides and roof of which a honeysuckle meshed itself and spread its scent. Fair and buxom she was, with a yellow-haired, apple-faced boy of four strained to her ample bosom, which billowed under her pink cotton gown. Yes, Miss Leigh had been there—she often came and had tea there in the afternoon, and as often not for tea, but just out of kindness, aye, a rare young lady, that she was, as good as gold, every bit of her, and a friend to every parish in the island. "Eh! it was a pity,—but—"

"Did you notice which way she went?" Tyson asked, interrupting the sing-song of the rising Hampshire speech.

"Well, now, she do be gone about an hour, or more, or half an hour, or it might be but twenty minutes and no more. Now, if she did n't go down

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the road Appledurcombe way, she must have gone up the road toward Whitwell, or by the path to Godshill—she has a friend as lives there. A great young lady for walking Miss Leigh do be."

Mrs. Yelf went to her gate and eagerly searched the heavens and the earth for a sign, and shook her head dubiously.

"You're sure she didn't go by the downs?" Tyson asked.

"She do be a great one for the downs, indeed she do."

Tyson brought a coin from his pocket, and when he put it into the child's chubby palm the discriminating infant, with more knowledge of currency than of letters, gave vent to surprise.

"A penny!" he cried, and then "A *chilling!*!"

Mrs. Yelf dropped a curtsey and pried the coin out of the fat fingers that were disposed to hold it. "Eh! but you've made a mistake, sir. Look! It is n't a shilling: it's a sovereign!"

"That's all right," said Tyson, as he swung the gate. "Good day, and good luck!"

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Chapter X. The Rose in Tyson's Pocket-book : : : : : :

HE climbed the downs again, but in all their airy and scented reaches he could not see Mary, and it was after the luncheon hour when, with the Bishop's bulging umbrella still under his arm, and the little joke he had meant to have with it frustrated, he dispiritedly picked his way down the face of the cliff and entered the drawing-room.

Lilies and roses were breathing their fragrance there, and a gentle wind and sunshine, with the chirp of birds and the rustle of foliage, were pouring in with a delicious effect of freedom and repose.

Lady Cheam was seated in an easy chair at a little ormolu table, on which there was a prayer-book, its jewelled clasp unfastened and its pages opened, as though it had been in recent use. A nectarine, a little silver and pearl fruit-knife, and a French novel with a wanton revelation of feminine charms on its yellow cover—also turned down at a flagging page—afforded further resources of relief from any tedium in the embroidery which occupied the dainty

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little lady, who in lavender silk, and with one infantile foot projected from a frothy rim of lace, made a picture of fragile Dresden prettiness.

“Miss Leigh has n’t come back?” he asked, with some precipitation, mannishly unaware of the delay involved in detaching the mind from the rites of the needle.

Lady Cheam raised her eyes slowly out of the familiar trance in which a difficult cross-stitch is made, and as she appeared to awake, deftly closed the French novel and slipped it upon a lower shelf of the table.

“I am sure I do n’t know where she is. That girl races about the country like a truant boy. She spends hours and hours and hours on the downs when she is here—never wants to do what others do. Won’t drive, won’t ride—will walk and climb. Some day she’ll have an accident. People who have accidents are usually very selfish. They ought all to be Christian Scientists, and then they could set their own legs.”

“An accident? How?”

“She is so foolhardy. The downs are not unsafe, but she is always going where she ought not to go—up and down some chine or other—ravine, you know—and the more dangerous it is the better she pretends to like it.”

Tyson listened, and strode from his chair to the window, from which one of the billowy slopes was visible. He returned, and repeated to Lady Cheam the circumstances of the Bishop’s departure.

His imagination prefigured various possible mishaps, and his impulse was to at once leave Lady Cheam to the choice of the prayer-book, the nec-

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tarine, or the novel, which he had observed with a quizzing smile.

"I guess I'll go and see if I can find her," he said.

"What do you think of her? Do you like her?" Lady Cheam inquired with a little laugh.

Tyson was taken by surprise, and faltered in answering. "She reminds me of a girl I know out West—reminds me of her in ever so many things, and yet they are different, as different as any two girls could be."

His brow puckered, and he was partly unwilling, partly unable, to discriminate to his interlocutor, or to himself. "She's a mighty nice girl, anyhow," he affirmed presently. "No airs. So sensible."

"Sensible! Scurrying over the downs like a mad-cap—full of all sorts of notions!"

"Unconventional. That's what I like," Tyson averred. "As I said to the Bishop, she seems like an American."

"Do n't you think she is just a little affected, a little self-conscious?" Lady Cheam continued. "Some people think so. Lady Romer—"

"Oh, Lady Romer!" Tyson's exclamation was scornfully eloquent.

"Lady Romer is a very clever judge of character. You do n't like her? She is nasty at times, but then the poor dear suffers so much from ill-health that one must be charitable."

Tyson was unmoved by the excuse for Lady Romer, and held on to the more engaging theme. "She must be a good girl as well as a clever one. The Bishop told me—"

"The Bishop spoils her."

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“She keeps house for him does n’t she ?”

“The Bishop is a widower without any children, and Mary is an orphan, the daughter of his only brother, Colonel Leigh. I suppose she is useful at the Palace, and does sometimes keep the poor dear from losing his head, or mislaying it, or doing it up in those shocking brown paper parcels that he is always carrying about with him. She is rather domestic. Do you think she is pretty ?”

“Pretty ? Why, of course she is.”

“How strange ! Some people think she is not pretty at all. Her nose is too short, and she has no figure. When they were children Julian used to call her ‘Needles’ or ‘Nettles,’ because —” Lady Cheam laughed, “she was so thin and prickly.”

Tyson was not amused at this, and for the first time experienced a touch of resentment against Julian and a loss of confidence in his taste.

“She has got a very sharp tongue. Some people—”
Tyson interrupted.

“Not what I should call a sharp tongue” he protested. “I should call her witty—perhaps a little bit sarcastic. See how she scored off Gleg the other night at dinner. He had no show with her.” He paused, and slowly and abstractedly asked another question, in dubiety as to its propriety. “I guess the Bishop’s very wealthy ?”

“The Bishop wealthy ! You don’t know how indigent, how poverty-stricken we *all* are in England, from Royalty down to poor little nobodies like Julian and me ! I fancy the Bishop is little better off now than when he was a curate.”

“He must have a large income. What does he do with it ?”

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“Gives it away, poor dear. And Mary encourages him.”

This information was a crumb of comfort to Tyson.

“Well, I’m off,” he said, but Lady Cheam picking a flower and putting it in the lapel of his coat again detained him.

“You are a dear good boy,” she declared. “Ah—any news? Have you heard anything from—from Sheba?”

“There’s nothing to hear,” he replied.

“Nothing to hear? I do n’t understand. You did n’t buy those shares for me?”

“Certainly, I did.”

“And have they gone up?”

“I do n’t know. Do n’t you worry about it.”

“Ah, I can see in your face that they will go up! You are teasing me,” she cried, finding relief through implication. “Now, about that what-do-you-call-it?—the margin? You can wait for that, can’t you? You shall have it, of course, very soon, but at present—”

“That’s all right, Lady Cheam; do n’t worry about that either. Just sit still and do n’t think about it at all.”

She waved her little hand to him as he mounted the steps. “Good-bye! Do n’t be late for dinner.”

From what he had heard Lady Cheam say, Tyson believed that he need not expect to find Mary in the open spaces of the downs, and that if she was to be found at all it would be in one of the rougher places where the undulous land broke into the undercliff and the sea. Accordingly when he reached the summit and looked about him he chose as a likely place a semi-circular hollow, in which the periphery of the other hills had been arrested. It seemed as though

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in the cosmic whirl of their foundation this vortex had been left incomplete, a concavity amid their convexities. Midway in its slope was a spring, and the rivulet thus formed gave water and shelter to a solitary farm, which looked like a green rosette breasted upon its close-cropped and bleak surroundings. Lower down, the stream rapidly deepened, and from a ford to be crossed by stepping-stones it plunged into a dark, wooded ravine, and there in secret, and by many leaps and turnings under overarching boughs, spouted and fell among the green-bearded boulders of a brown, cliff-crowned beach.

Tyson entered the cool shade by a steep slippery path overhung and choked by the boughs and brambles, and drenched by the dim green mist into which all light was turned in sifting through the interlaced foliage. Above and below rose the smooth, grey moss-covered columns of soaring beeches, the reddish trunks of storm-beaten oaks, and the slender, glistening shafts of swaying birches. Pigeons were murmuring overhead, and from the depths came the drip and gurgle of the hidden stream.

Tyson's instincts had not misled him, and as he pushed through the thicket to an opening he saw Mary, with her back towards him, seated on a rocky ledge overlooking the sea. Her elbows were resting on her knees, and her chin was cradled in her palms —the attitude of dreams. Pleasure gave him a forward impulse, and then he hesitated. What was this strange heaviness that he before now had felt in her presence? He desired to be near her, and yet sometimes when he was in her company his heart sank and his spirits fell in a longing that had no hope and no courage in it.

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He stood still and smiled faintly. "Ahem!"

She turned and nodded. "Ahem! Then you did n't follow me to Wroxall after all. That was sensible."

"Oh, but I did follow you. I followed you all morning; guess I got lost among the foot-hills. These downs remind me of the foot-hills."

"I thought you people of the far West never lost yourselves—that you were all like scouts and Indians, and able to follow the lightest foot-step by its imprint, to find finger-posts in blades of grass and mile-stones in grains of sand. Can't you do that? And won't you sit down?" she said, moving to make room for him, and gathering her skirts.

"No, I'm not as smart as all that, though I have hit the trail in my day. This is doing pretty well, however—to find you now. Do you know, we were beginning to be a bit anxious about you?"

"We? Who?"

"Ah—why, Lady Cheam—both of us," he replied, explaining that he had been back to Culvercombe since morning.

"Absurd," she said. "See, that moss is wet! You can sit here."

That brought him closer to her, and while he changed his position and she watched him, a hot flush struggled indistinctly through the tan in his rugged visage. His limited knowledge of women was wholly unsophisticated, and he would have resented as heresy any cynical hint that coquetry persists in the sex from the time of the first lisp to the extremity of the last wrinkle, and that though they may change or abandon their faiths, their affections, or their morals, this blandishment is practised as irresistibly as breathing

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to the very end of their days. He had not seen any coquetry in Mary, and a more experienced observer would not have been entirely safe in predicting it from her present actions.

“ You smoke, don’t you ? A pipe ? I do n’t mind. There ! ” she said, with the satisfaction of a person ministering adequately to her own comfort. Then glancing at her watch, “ Now we can talk. You’ve had your tea ? I had mine at the farm. Yes, that trail-hunting, or whatever you call it, must be fascinating ; it must be like navigating without the aid of logarithms, or scientific instruments, marching on your way and turning darkness into light by the triumph of your mere senses, the senses of touch, scent and sight. That is splendid ; it makes one think of Ulysses, and of the wild surmise of Cortez, or Balboa, was n’t it ?—on the peak in Darien. That is what I should like to do—hit the trail.”

She spoke so tumultuously that a pink glowed over her pale, transparent face, and a new hope rushed in on Tyson.

“ It is n’t so wonderful ; it ’s learned easily enough. When I was a boy under twenty I was alone, on the trail and off the trail, for months at a time. Look here, Miss Mary, why do n’t you come out there ? Nona—Miss Plant—would be pleased to see you, and so would the Senator, and I—why, you do n’t mean it, do you ? ”

“ Oh, I should like to see those plains and those mountains, and feel as if I had all the world to myself, as one must do in those great spaces.”

“ You could come. It would be easy enough—dead easy, as we say—with a chaperon. Nona her-

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self is as good as a chaperon. She'll take care of you."

"Chaperon!" cried Mary disdainfully. "A chaperon among the stars!"

"Well, that's the way Nona feels herself, but the Senator insisted on a chaperon for her, and it was a good thing for Mrs. Dennison anyway. But, say! Don't expect too much. It's fine out there—no denying that—but give me old England. I prefer to be here—yes, I prefer it every time!"

"Ah, those transports of yours! I believe I should like Miss Plant. I like original people, people who think for themselves, people who do something in the world."

"Oh, yes, you'd like her. Everybody does. There are not many girls like Nona.

"I'll tell you what!" he said, returning to the trail. "It is n't in desert places that the trail is hard to find—it is in the crowded places—in cities—like London; in countries, like England."

"Everywhere," she assented, "there are trails that baffle one and lead to nowhere. That's the reason we so often miss the goal we are seeking—that so many things go wrong in the world."

"That's so," he said, with his eyes on the silky sea and his thoughts far away. "I've got a sister. You know that? Did Lady Cheam happen to speak of her to you?"

"Yes, and I am very much interested. You can't learn anything about her?"

"Not so far. I've had inquiries made by a firm of solicitors; I've made inquiries myself."

"And you find no clue as to her whereabouts?"

Tyson had reasons for his procrastination in an

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obvious duty—for delaying it as he had done from day to day ; but he could not explain them to her, and could only shake his head and submit to the sharp pain of self-reproach.

“Have n’t you been to the home, the institution in which she was placed,” Mary continued.

“Not yet,” he stammered. “I went to Wakeport—that’s the town—the day I landed, and meant to return there after seeing Lady Cheam, but—I’ve lingered here somehow because—”

“You ought not to delay. You should lose no time, not a moment!” she said, with an emphasis which expressed both impatience and reproof. “Come! We are late,” and she rose so quickly and with such energy that she herself seemed to be bent on the search that he had put off.

“Yes,” he admitted as he followed her. “You are quite right. I’ll start to-morrow.”

They emerged from the thicket and struck out over the slant of the downs in the direction of Bonchurch. The sea had deepened into a vivid green, crisped by white feathery waves, and the sun, though it was still reflected in the silver ripples, had sloped behind the summit to which they were ascending. Tyson was taciturn, but there were moments when not touch, nor voice, nor vision was necessary to sustain this companionship, in which when there was no speech there seemed to be no reticence. But the felicity did not endure. There was a consciousness of instability and evanescence in his pleasure as of things that, portending joy, pass in pain as soon as they come, and though he could not define it he breathed under the weight of a strange disquiet.

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“Cheer up!” cried Mary. “You have many reasons to be cheerful, much to make you content.”

“I’ve made money. You don’t consider that a great achievement, nor any great recommendation, do you?”

“I am afraid gold has some quality in it that occasionally turns it to lead in the soul, but that does not happen if it is properly used. Money makes splendid opportunity.”

“Show me an opportunity,” he demanded, with a tremor in his voice, and then with a knitted brow and a darkened face: “No, money will not do for me what I’d like. I’ve plenty of it—But a youth such as mine was leaves scars and keeps a man at a disadvantage. I don’t deceive myself—money does n’t always count.”

He kicked at a bare patch of loose chalk and dislodged the flint embedded in it. Then he added, “Tell me how to make use of some, and I’ll do it.”

“Perhaps I can do that; they say I am a shameless beggar,” she answered, “but I did n’t mean to beg from you at this moment. I was thinking—you must n’t lose faith in yourself or in your ideals. Your opportunities, if you choose to use them—Look!”

They were on the highest ridge of the downs, and in the dusk the clouds had shaped themselves into a golden archipelago held in a bowl of lilac sea. The light was dwindling, and in the shadow the downs had become tawny, and the patches of purple heath like smouldering fires. Suddenly a star dawned in the purple lagoon of air, steady and clear amidst all the blended colour. Higher and higher it seemed to

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rise and drift towards the middle of the aërial lake, swelling in radiance and apparently projected enticingly towards the earth by a phantom arm.

Tyson felt the thrill of Mary's fingers on his wrist, and as he turned at her exclamation he saw her eyes fixed on the star.

"Look! there is the hilt of a sword in the lake. Excalibur!" she whispered.

She was out of breath, and they sat down for a moment on one of the furrows which the beating of wind and rain had creased in the turf. She became silent, and as he mused in company with her he took out a pocket-book and turned over the memoranda in it, a habit that often overtook him in moments of abstraction. There were addresses in it, clippings from newspapers, the tables of a mining engineer, and a calendar. A faded flower slipped out—its stalk dry and brown, with only one petal clinging to it, and that stained and sear.

Mary watched him pick it up, and said, "What is that? A bit of seaweed?"

"No, not seaweed," he replied, as he put it back into its place. "It is a rose."

"A rose?"

"Yes, that rose you chaffed me about; the rose you dropped in the drawing room that morning."

He made his confession with some unsteadiness, and looked furtively, hesitatingly, at her for the effect. She did not change colour, but in one ejaculation he seemed to hear the reverberation of arctic ice in a northern night.

"How late we are! Lady Cheam will be vexed," she said; "we have been out too long."

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Chapter XI. Tyson Meets a Modern Financier : : : :

TYSON left Culvercombe early the next day, and later in the morning was the subject of discussion in the still-room, where Prawle, the footman who had "valleted" him, and Brixton, the butler, stretched their legs and refreshed themselves, the former with a tankard of ale, and the latter, his elder and superior, with a glass of port and a biscuit.

"Not a bad sort," said Prawle, in a tone of indulgence, "and wonderful to think what he 's made of himself."

"Treated you 'andsomely, I 'ope, Robert?"

"A ten pun note. I cannot complain, though he might have made it twenty while he was at it."

"Oh, well, he 'll be back."

"That 's what I am looking forward to—that 's what I 'm thinkin ' of. He 's haffable, I can say that, and not difficult to get along with. He actually slapped me on the back once, and called me 'old fellow.' What do you say to that?"

"Too familiar; too familiar, Robert; but that 's

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the way with those Americans. I should object myself to being slapped on the back. Bad form, do n't you think? I was always particular myself as to matters of form."

"P'raps it is; p'raps it is. But I 'oodwink it in this case. Why should n't he do somethink for us—somethink 'andsome? In fact," said Robert, stretching his legs as far as they would go, and questioning his shoes, "I mean to see if he cawn't put me on to a little 'flyer' in Wall Street."

Mr. Brixton held up his port to the light and shrugged his shoulders. "I never spec'late, Robert. A little bit on the 'osses is more to my taste; much more gentlemanly than spec'latting in stock."

"But they 're all at it in these days, every man Jack of them. Her ladyship buzzes about him like a fly in a pot of treacle. I heard her advising that old cat, Lady Romer, to buy Sheba. The only ones that took no interest in it were the Bishop and Miss Leigh."

"And pray what is Sheba? Copper, gold, silver, lead, or what might it be?"

"Blest if I know; but the next time I 'm slapped on the back I mean to get some of it."

Mr. Brixton poured out another glass of port and put it up to his clean-shaven, sacerdotal, drooping mouth with the leisurely gusto of an epicure. "Well, well, if you hear anythink let me know. If her ladyship can make a bit out of it, God knows we need it. Langdale 's in a very bad way, I 'm told, and here things are going from bad to worse. Any news from Julian? I suppose we are indebted to him for our introduction to our curious friend, Tyson?"

"I forgot to tell you," replied Prawle. "Julian

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won't come back—things won't blow over this time as they've done before. I met Captain Hugh Dunmail's man when I was in Portsmouth yesterday—General Dunmail's brother, you know. Captain Dunmail's sworn to kill Julian at sight. Barker told me her ladyship was crying this morning. I take it that she has had the same news; poor woman."

Brixton replenished his glass to steady himself in the shock. "Kill Julian! Julian owes me two hundred pounds if he owes me a penny," he cried. "Oh, this is 'ard, 'ard, 'ard!"

The slender stem of the glass broke from the force with which he put it down. "That's a bad sign too!" he raved. "Hold on, though! Tyson seems extraordinary fond of Julian. Now if I could get the circumstances into his ear—who knows?—he might make the money good! Excuse my langwidge, Robert;" (his language became profane) "but really after what you tell me you could knock me over with a feather."

"Do n't mention it, old chap, do n't mention it. Should n't be surprised if you was right, and he made it good to you. I must say that for a money-spinner he does seem to be a bit of a simpleton."

Meanwhile Tyson had made the pleasant journey from Ventnor to Waterloo, over the emerald waters of Spithead and through the rural beauties of Hampshire and Surrey, and he was now on the departure platform of the Liverpool train at Euston. A porter found an empty compartment in a first-class carriage for him, and he expected to have it for himself, but as the train moved out of the station a footman opened the door and hurriedly placed on the unoccupied seat a dressing-bag, a mackintosh, and a lunch-

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eon basket. As the footman alighted and touched his cockaded hat his master jumped in, and dropping breathlessly into a corner, replaced his silk hat with a soft travelling cap. Tyson was occupied with his reading, and only indistinctly aware of these proceedings: he was screened by his newspaper, and did not put it down until the train had passed Willesden and was spinning along through the fair green country that never lost its fascination for him—the fields that seemed to have been washed, combed and brushed; the low-branched wide-spreading trees, with their impenetrable foliage, that looked as though they were carved or hewn masses of sculpture rather than of vegetation; the interminable hedgerows setting a jewelled border to every lane and meadow; the neat little stations with their flashing beds and embankments of flowers; and the sleepy, toy-like villages, which, dozing snugly in hollows and on hill-sides, communicated to him the conviction and solace of Arcadian simplicity and peace.

The country enthralled him, and he had been gazing through the window some time before he glanced at his fellow passenger, who had fallen asleep in the corner of the opposite side of the compartment. He was a familiar type of a "city" man—of the kind that swarms in the neighbourhood of Lombard street and the Royal Exchange, well tailored, virile in movement and fastidiously groomed. The grey frock suit fitted him to perfection, and a rich crimson scarf deepened the glow of plethora in his florid, dark-bearded face. Tyson recognized the type, which nationality varies in manners of speech and dress but not in fundamental characteristics. He was conscious of a degree of sympathy with it, or at least with the

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dogged, tireless energy with which such a man would resist antagonism.

"I've seen *you* often before," Tyson thought. "I've seen you in 'the pit' in Chicago, and I've seen you hundreds of times in Wall Street, and it was only the other day that I saw you (scores of you) in front of the Royal Exchange."

Then Tyson's memory fixed on something more definite, and he became sure that somewhere at a distance and at some time not recent but remote, he had seen not merely the type, but the individual before him. The sleeping man had undergone some change, that was all. What change?

Ah, it was the heavy, nicely cropped, dark beard. That was it, and in addition to that the evidences of improved circumstances. Then Tyson's eye caught the gold-mounted dressing-bag in the rack, and below the crest embossed on its morocco sides he unravelled a monogram of two initials—"J. P."

It was Pewster!

Pewster slowly opened his eyes and glared in a momentary stupefaction.

"Well, well, well!" he then exclaimed, offering his hand and gushing on Tyson with intimate friendliness. "Why, Jim, old boy, is that you? Lucky I knew you were on this side, for if I had n't, and had suddenly seen you sitting there as large as life when I awoke, I should certainly have thought you were a spook, or a portrait model from Madame Tussaud's. So you're back on your native heath at last! Well, well, well! Oh, I've heard all about you! Lady Cheam's reticence did n't keep me in darkness—nice woman she is, eh? 'Pon my soul, I meant to look you up and invite you to my little place on the river,

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and you 've got to see my little house in Park Lane. I suppose you 've heard something about me, too ? Well, my boy, Me Too has n't been idle since he came back from the South-West. Me Too has made himself a shining example to the youth of the land of what industry and other virtues will do. They want him in the House of Commons, and who knows ? I 'm not boasting, but, my boy—but—are you listening ?—there may be a coronet for him yet. His little maxims are quoted in the newspapers, his picture is in *The Graphic* and *The Illustrated London News*. They smile upon Pewster nowadays and respect him—and," he added, with a changing, scowling face, as he withdrew his unshaken hand, "most of them are civil to him."

Tyson was silent, and Pewster unstrapped his elaborately fitted luncheon basket and brought forth a dish of *paté de foie gras* and a small bottle of champagne.

"Have a drink," he said, as he poured out two glasses of the wine and held out one to Tyson, who shook his head and turned to the whirling panorama through the windows.

"No ? Now, look here, Jim Tyson, what the devil 's the matter with you ? I 've been talking to you, for old times' sake, as I would n't talk to any other man alive. What 's the matter with you ? Do you think that I 'm the same man now that I was when I kept books for you at a hundred dollars a month and took your orders at Sheba ? Are you blind ? Are you the same old muddlehead and blunderer you were out there ? Can't you see ? Can't you hear ?"

Tyson was making a resolute effort to control himself.

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“Well, I guess you are just about the same,” he said. “You don’t seem to have changed much. You are still drinking. Probably you now pay for your drinks out of your own pocket. Whose money it is I do n’t know. I should n’t wonder if you got it from lambs like Julian Glynne.”

He picked up his paper again and coolly looked at it, but not without a covert and wary preparation for surprises.

“Look here, Tyson, the law of libel is not settled in England with a gun as it is out West.”

“Ah, it sounds strange to hear you talk of the law. You did n’t have much respect for it when I knew you at Sheba and in Santa Fé.”

The crimson of Pewster’s face darkened into purple.

“Bah! You make me tired,” he cried. “What do you know about Julian Glynne?”

“He’s a friend of mine. It is in his power to put you in jail. I’ll advise him to do it.”

Pewster laughed derisively. “In jail, eh? And for what?”

“Procuring money under false pretences for one thing—selling him that which did not belong to you.”

Pewster pondered, and drank a glass of the champagne, before he began again in a calmer voice: “Now, look here, Tyson, can you be serious and sensible just for a minute. Did you ever see what I sold him—the papers? Did you ever look at them? Do you know what they are, or where they are?”

Tyson was looking out of the window at the flying view of boys in red and blue flannels playing cricket.

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“That’s right; don’t lie. Always look into things and be sure you understand them before you form an opinion on them. In other words, don’t jump to conclusions and make an ass of yourself. That is what I am always instilling into the minds of the young people when I talk to them at meetings. It’s what I say when I write articles in the juvenile papers. The lesson is just as useful to you as it is to them. Are you listening? . . . But there’s an hour yet before we reach Crewe, and we must kill the time somehow.”

There came to Tyson’s memory incidents of his early days in the South-West, when the era of the six-shooter was not yet ended and a pistol shot was an effective peace-maker.

“Now listen to me, I say,” Pewster went on; “you call Julian Glynne your friend. Well, he’s mine too, and a grateful friend, a very much obliged friend, mark that. When I sold that document to him I was throwing money away. I let him have it for a song; I was dead broke; I did n’t know its value any more than you do now. You remember he did n’t have the papers with him when Nona found him that night?”

Tyson pricked his ears, and with quickened interest in the knowledge he was revealing fixed his eyes on Pewster.

“You never saw them, never asked for them, never looked for them. Oh, Tyson, why did n’t it occur to you to search for them? Or if you were too lazy to do it yourself, why did n’t you send one of the boys to pick them up on the trail over the lava? But you were never meant for business, Tyson; you’ve got no head for it. You know nothing about it, and nothing

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about mines. You're too sentimental, too soft, for business, my boy. And the Senator's soft stuff too—no brains; a mere creature of luck, as you are. I tell you, Tyson, the only man in your outfit is Nona. I respect her.

"Well," he continued, "the papers were found and restored to Julian, and now they belong to me and Mike Dougherty. You remember Mike? Oh, he has n't done with your doughboy of a Senator yet."

He finished his glass and smacked his lips as he refilled it.

Tyson appeared to be reading.

"Obtaining money under false pretences, eh? You talk to me like that? Whose money are you splurging with, I'd like to know! Money from a mine that does n't belong to you; that's it. Instead of playing the gentleman in England, you ought to be living in a dug-out."

Tyson sat in his corner repressing himself—struggling to fathom the significance of Pewster's words, but distrustful and confused.

Pewster now yawned. "Perhaps you wonder why I condescend—yes, condescend—to tell you all this—to speak to you at all when you've treated me like a hog. Well, I tell you. I've done it just for the fun of seeing your face; that has been as good as a play. Excuse me now. I'm going to have forty winks."

As the train neared Crewe he broke out again. "I understand you've taken a fancy to Culvercombe. You can't have it, Tyson, it's mine. The cottage at Laleham, the house in Park Lane, and Culvercombe, they're all a man of simple tastes can ask for, except a bit of shooting and fishing in Scotland."

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“ You ’ll never get Culvercombe, Pewster ! ” flared Tyson, as the train drew into the busy, smoky station.

The servant reappeared at the door and removed the hand baggage.

“ Good day,” said Pewster. “ I leave you here. I ’m on my way to Langdale Hall. Lord Langdale ’s a great friend of mine—has asked me down for the shooting.”

“ Take care of yourself, Pewster,” Tyson called after him. “ The tar is n’t all off yet.” But as the jaunty figure in grey strode away, with a light, insolent fling of the hand, Tyson burned with the gusty flame of murder. What pricked him was the truth he had to swallow in some of the things Pewster had said, or what in his chagrin and self-abasement he took for the truth.

“ A mere creature of luck ! ” That was not so wide of the mark ; a dreamer and a sentimentalist, a failure but for the accidental discovery of Sheba and his chance meeting with the Senator ! Had he not often said to himself before saying it to Miss Leigh on the downs yesterday, “ I never earned it ; it was all luck ? ” Pewster had “ sized him up and taken him down a peg ”—Pewster of all men ; and in the gathering twilight as the train resumed its journey, Tyson hunched himself in his corner and felt as if he had been whipped.

There were other things to think of than his wounded vanity, however, and he found relief in turning them over. Pewster was an unfathomable liar, of course, but his story of the recovery of Julian’s lost documents had not the sound of invention, surprising as it was. That the papers had

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been found and that they had some mysterious value greater than Pewster or Julian had anticipated was not impossible, but if they had been passed from Julian to Pewster, why had Julian not consulted Tyson or the Senator before parting with them? It was no news to Tyson that Dougherty and Pewster were working together, for after his discharge from Sheba Pewster had been employed by Dougherty, who was glad to take advantage of the former book-keeper's knowledge of conditions of the mine. For many years Dougherty had conspired in the courts and in politics—in endless litigation and by popular agitation—to dispossess the rightful owners. Julian might have given a clue to the latest manœuvre, and that he had not done so was a pity, but Tyson did not arraign him for anything more serious than thoughtlessness. Tyson was the simplest of men, a magnanimous enemy, but obstinate in his affections which, when they were once bestowed, had a durability beyond reason: malice and cunning were not parts of his nature. His vanity had been ruffled, but his modesty was greater than his conceit.

So as his journey progressed through a sterner, duller landscape than that of the south, a landscape darkened by collieries and smoking manufacturing towns, his feeling towards Pewster relaxed into mere wonder that so obvious a rogue should succeed, and confidence that he would yet come to grief. Of the integrity of Julian he had no suspicion.

When he alighted at the terminus, however, and again set foot in his native town, he at once sent a cablegram to the Senator, and before he went to bed

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that night a brief reply came from Nona — a reply that somehow glistened with the spray of the Atlantic and was electric with the air of the West :

“Same old mine, same old bluff, same old Nona.”

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Chapter XII. The Girl who had Disappeared : : : : : : :

WHEN Tyson came down stairs next morning and looked out from the portico of the big station hotel the rain was sweeping the public square with the sharpness and flash of scythes, flooding the gutters, and splashing on the pavement in steely spikes. It wreathed itself in wire-drawn eddies around the columns of the vast Corinthian hall across the way, and poured down the pediment in a cataract. It spurted up and down and blew from every quarter at once, taking hats and umbrellas by surprise.

Heavy as the downpour was, and gusty as the wind, the street was crowded by saunterers of the poorer class without occupation or destination, who, if they were not impervious to the rain, appeared indifferent to it and careless of any need of shelter—the short-skirted, bonnetless, bare-ankled women with baskets and bundles on their heads and small red shawls around their bare necks; the heavy-footed, stunted men—dock labourers in malodorous corduroys and small tweed caps, sailors in greasy blue

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serge whitened by brine, and swarthier men of the engine-room and stoke-hole with the grime of oily vapours rubbed into their gaunt, sallow faces.

Ragged children swarmed in shrill, restless flocks, like wary predatory birds, and they seemed to be the same children of long ago that Tyson remembered, unwashed, unfed, unclothed, unshod, as they had always been. He had forgotten how very dirty and tatterdemalion they were: even the rags they wore were insufficient to decently cover them. Many of them were shoeless and shirtless, and without head-covering except a shock of hair; many of them had no other covering than a woeful misfit of a man's coat clumsily cut down in the sleeves, and a man's trousers curtailed above the knees, with the cloth so threadbare and tattered that the naked body underneath was exposed with the unabashed frankness of nature.

"Mart—chees!" they screamed. "Two boxes a penny. Mart—chees!" "Shoe-laces! Penny a bunch!" "Buy a flower, mister! Buy a flower! On'y a penny."

They had nothing that the better dressed people who had pennies wanted, and the better class of people seemed deaf and blind to them, until a too persistent urchin brought upon himself a cuff, an imprecation, a kick or the prod of an umbrella. The better class of people smoked their briar pipes and held up their bespattered skirts, but, like the loafers, did not increase their speed on account of the rain: they were used to torrents and blustering winds, and when acquaintances met they stood and gossiped as leisurely as on a fine day, heedless of the wet and the flapping of their dripping garments. They were a rougher,

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sturdier, heavier people than those in the south, and spoke with the broad Lancashire accent which Tyson himself had not yet entirely lost.

Occasionally a policeman in oilskins made a drive among the boys and girls, and for a minute they dispersed like thieving birds at the sound of a gun-shot, to congregate again as soon as he was out of sight, and to renew their cries and offer better bargains.

“Mart—chees! Mart—chees! Three boxes a penny! 'Ere you are, mister. 'Ave *four* boxes for a penny!”

At nearly every corner and between the streets there was a gaudy gin-palace—a “public”—which with green, yellow and red paint, mirrors, crystal chandeliers, and silver-plated fittings, glittered in the prevalent brown and grey, and attracted to its door and counters a reeking, red-faced, noisy crowd of slatternly women and sodden men. Over the doors, and in gilt letters in the windows, was the name of “Grooby” mentioned by Julian—the Sir Peter Grooby, distiller and brewer, who like a spirit from his own vats had risen to a high place in English society.

Tyson sighed. From this point of view his England and his countrymen were not edifying. There were tragic inequalities which he had forgotten. The children particularly revealed such ignorance and poverty that the ardour of the returning native cooled, and his amusement in their tricks and in the grotesqueness of their rags gave place to gloomy ponderings on their hopelessness, though possibly their condition preyed on him with more acuteness than it did on them, as the sight of poverty often does in a

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sympathetic observer. The cruelest part of it all was that among the round-headed, blunt-nosed, small-eyed majority, plainly the offspring of heredity and persistent vice and penury, there was an occasional boy or girl with a refinement of feature and expression that indicated superior parentage. Where were the sponsors for these, who could only be accounted for by desertion and illegitimacy ?

Tyson had the disposition and the intention to do something, but his own problem was before him and tied his hands for the present.

Putting on a soft hat and a mackintosh, he refused a cab, and with a full heart and a questioning mind he set out in the storm for the suburb in which stood the institution in which Bessie had been placed. It was in the northern part of the town, and the way was through a familiar neighbourhood of little houses and little shops of dingy brick that had lost all its original colour—dismal enough in fair weather, and leaden now in rattle of wind and rain, the dropping smoke and the splash of mud. Again the “publics” made a glittering show at every corner, and if business was slack elsewhere here it thrived, the bars being thronged to the doors by men and women, while occasionally children passed in and out, carrying pitchers of beer and flasks of spirits for home consumption. “Grooby’s Entire” was the sign on most of them—Grooby, the millionaire—Grooby, the giver of picture galleries and museums !

The little houses were of an unvarying pattern—two stories in height, with three square yards of garden in front, and that guarded by sharp iron railings. Ornaments in the little bay windows gave a clue to the occupation of the tenants, and from the

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number of model ships in glass cases or on stands, the branches of coral, the floral anchors, and the parrots in cages, it was plain that not a few were seafarers. One street differed from another not by its architecture, but by its condition and its reflection of the relative prosperity of its denizens. In the shabbiest lived artisans, firemen, boatswains and boatswains' mates; in others lace curtains hung starchily in the bay windows, the gardens planted with nasturtiums and other hardy annuals, a visible mahogany table, a chair with a crocheted antimacassar, and the pipe-clayed doorsteps, bore witness to the elegancies of life attainable by marine engineers, stevedores, mates and even captains. In one of these band-boxes of the better class, which was further distinguished by the contiguity of an ugly modern church of the transitional style, Tyson had been born, and he turned the corner to look at it and at the leering gargoyle with the body of a dragon and the face of a demon, which was furiously ejecting rain, as it had done when in the long ago he had flattened his soft nose against the pane of the little bed-room window and gazed fearlessly and wonderingly at the vomiting monstrosity.

As Tyson tramped on, the vision of a pinched, ill-clad, shivering, serious boy was at his elbow—an apparition of himself—and as he dwelt on it the forlorn little figure became detached and accompanied him as a companion with whom he could converse.

Where there had been farms and hedges and meadows the town now throve in further extensions of the little houses and shops; but Tyson saw it in its former state, and the busy highway became a

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country lane on a November day with an icy wind snapping and shrieking in the leafless boughs, and driving along the ruts in the frozen mud.

“Very cold, is n’t it ?” said Tyson, turning up the collar of his coat and beating his gloved hands.

“Yes, that it is,” said the boy, who had neither gloves nor overcoat. He carried a small bundle under his arm, and buried his hands in his trouser pockets. His face was blue with cold.

“Going far ?”

“Only two miles.”

“A fire will look good a day like this, won’t it ? On your way home ?”

“N—n—no. I’m going to see my sister.”

“Got a sister ? That’s nice.”

“This is a present for her—some woollen mittens and some gingerbread,” the boy said, touching his parcel.

“She’ll like those. It’s very good of you. And where’s the sister ?”

The boy hesitated : he did not like to say “workhouse”—that ultimate depth of social disqualification from which even the poorest of the poor shrink as from a leprosy, or from a nameless degradation little above that of the gaol.

He hesitated, and then used another word for it. “In an institution.”

“Oh, an institution !” said Tyson. “How’s that ?”

“She’s an orphan ; I’m an orphan.”

“That’s sad. Who looks out for you ?”

“Nobody except me. I’m in business. I’m going to get her out soon and have her live with me. She doesn’t like the—institution.”

“The orphan asylum ?”

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“The institution,” the boy persisted.

“And what is your business?” Tyson continued.

“Ship broking.”

“Indeed! That’s a fine business.”

“Aye, it’s pretty good. Five shillings a week now; six shillings a week next year.”

They came to an inn which abutted on the neglected graveyard of the village church, standing on a hill overlooking the sea. “Come in and have a bite, and get warm,” said Tyson.

“No, thank you,” the little fellow replied. “I’ll be late for the institution, and they may not let me see her.”

“But you look hungry.”

“Not very.”

“You look cold.”

“Oh, I’ll run the rest of the way; that’ll warm me up.”

Tyson took a five-pound note out of his pocket, and offered it. The boy looked amazed, but shook his head.

“No, thank you, much obliged. I can get along,” he said shaking his head. “Good-bye.”

And he left Tyson’s side and trotted down the hill at a quicker pace.

“Well!” said Tyson to himself, as he watched the retreating figure, “You always were an independent little cuss, and I do n’t believe they’ll ever starve or freeze that pride out of you, my boy!”

Down a valley in the direction the boy took stood two dreary buildings of enormous size in high-walled grounds—a workhouse and a gaol, bare and sombre as such places usually are. There was little to distinguish one from the other, except that the work-

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house had many windows and the gaol only a few heavily barred casements.

“They ought to have signs on them,” Tyson mused, and he thought of a befitting one for both,—“Grooby’s Entire.”

He entered a lodge at the workhouse gate. His hat was slouchy, his overcoat wet and bespattered with mud; raindrops were dripping down his eyeglasses. He looked like a person of no importance, and felt like one. A threadbare boyish clerk was working at a high desk, and a stout, surly woman in black alpaca was rocking herself before an open fire.

“Can I see the matron?” Tyson asked.

The woman wheeled in her chair and glanced at him impatiently. “I’m the matron. What do *you* want?”

“I want to inquire about a former inmate here.”

“A former inmate! What do we know about former inmates? Them that’s here now give us trouble enough, without our bothering with them that’s gone.”

The clerk turned from his books and smiled appreciatively at the matron while he belittled Tyson in a supercilious stare.

“What name?” the matron continued.

“Tyson.”

“Well, there’s a dozen Tysons here now. Perhaps you’d like to take your choice. You’re welcome to any of them.”

“Elizabeth Tyson is the child I am talking of,” said Tyson.

“Ah, *that* one! She’s given us more trouble than all the rest; the one that those London solicitors have

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been making such a fuss about, as if we had n't enough to do without answering long letters from lawyers! I suppose you came from them? Well, I've told them all we know. There seems to be some mystery about that child, there's so much to-do about her. A missing heiress, maybe!" she said sarcastically.

"Maybe," replied Tyson seriously. "Anyhow, if you or anybody else can put me on her track I'll make it worth your while."

He threw open his overcoat, and as he consulted his watch—a watch that Nona had given him, ornamented with a jewelled monogram—that, and the raiment underneath, simple as it was, conveyed to the shrewd eyes of the matron possibilities which softened her asperity.

"Won't you sit down, sir?" she said, going to a shelf and reaching among several leather-bound folios with some assiduity. "You are n't from the solicitors?"

"I am their client. They have been inquiring in my behalf."

"A relative, I suppose."

"Yes, a relative."

"I thought so. It's a good many years ago, but I remember that child as if it had been only yesterday. A pretty little thing, that she was. She did look like you, sir—in a way."

Tyson listened impatiently.

"Now here it is, in plain black and white. You can see for yourself," the matron proceeded, opening before him one of the big books and reading various entries aloud to him, without revealing anything that he had not already learned through the solicitors—a few names and dates, and the bare fact

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that Elizabeth Tyson had been discharged from the workhouse to enter the service of a Mrs. Twiggs as maid-of-all-work.

“What does a maid-of-all-work have to do? Is it a hard job for a little girl?” Tyson asked sympathetically.

The question amused the matron by its ingenuousness. “There’s precious little that she doesn’t do in most families. Of course it is n’t likely to be what you’d call easy.”

“Long hours?”

“All hours as well as all work in most cases—not like a trained servant in such a family as yours no doubt is, sir.”

“Are they ill-treated?”

“Oh, I do n’t know as you could say as they are ill-treated, but you know what they are called, sir—slaves. Sometimes they’re put on a bit, I must say.”

Tyson suppressed a groan, as he pressed the question, “And what sort of a mistress was Mrs. Twiggs likely to be?”

“Well, she took in boarders. That does n’t make the place any easier; now, does it? She was a widow. She seemed to take quite a fancy to Elizabeth, the girl was so fresh-looking and good-natured.”

“Poor child! Poor little Bessie!” cried Tyson, in a trembling voice. “As I understand,” he continued, “Mrs. Twiggs disappeared several years ago, and the child disappeared at the same time.”

“That’s it, sir—skipt by the light of the moon is what they say, if you’ll excuse me for using such a vulgar expression—so many of them does! There was that young gentleman that came from London—

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the solicitors' young man, and a private detective too—they made inquiries everywhere, and nothing came of it."

Tyson shook his head despairingly. "You take no further interest in a child when she once leaves you?"

"Oh, how could we, sir? There's always hundreds of others to take their places when they go; and there's enough to do, that there is, in looking after them while they're here."

Tyson turned from the book and confronted the shabby youth, who was listening with round eyes and an open mouth.

"Excuse me, sir—Mrs. Skirving—was you speaking of Mrs. Adelbert Twiggs as used to live at No. 13, Smithwick Terrace?"

"Aye, that's her. What do you know about her?—Tompkins has only been here a week or two," the matron said, by way of explanation, referring to the clerk.

"I saw her in London Road—let me see—it was only last Friday."

"You saw her? Do you think you can find her? I'll give you—! Find her, and it will be the best day's work you've ever done in your life!" Tyson clamoured impetuously, dragging Tompkins from his high stool and hustling him towards the door. "Find her, and I'll make it worth your while. Aren't you going? Wake up, man!"

He could not control himself, and Tompkins put up his hands to protect himself, and slouched back to his desk. The thought of what he might exact reeled in his feeble brain—the fortune he had dreamed of and strained for, spending in the quest of it all his

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spare coin—hoping for it not by labour but by such devices as “missing word” contests, racing sweepstakes, and picture puzzles in penny papers which guaranteed five shillings a day for life to the successful guesser. A pallor spread over his face and his eyes resembled those of a white rat; a little froth oozed at each corner of his trembling lips; his tongue was dry, and speech difficult.

“He can’t leave now; there’d be trouble if he did; but after six o’clock perhaps—Well, now, is n’t it wonderful?” said the matron.

“Well, at six o’clock, or after—you find Mrs. Twiggs, or let me know where I can find her to-night, to-morrow, next week, any time, and it will be the best day’s work you have ever done. Hold on, though! I might find her myself. What is she like?”

First dismay, then cunning and cupidity, appeared in Tompkins’ waxy visage. He possessed a secret as valuable as the “correct solution” required by his penny papers.

“What’s she like?” he repeated, thickly and slowly. “Why, like anybody!”

“Young or old? How was she dressed?” urged Tyson.

“Not that old, and not that young neither.”

“How was she dressed?”

“I do n’t remember. Come to think, I’m not sure that it was London Road that I saw her. Ah!—Look here, if *you* find her do *I* get the money?”

“Yes! Come and see me at my hotel—at the Station Hotel—at ten o’clock, and make no mistake about it.”

The matron was calculating that a profitable en-

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terprise was drifting away from her. "Perhaps I might hear of her, sir. I'm sure if I could—might I ask if you would—"

"Certainly—you shall have as much or more," acquiesced Tyson. "And see here, this anyhow," handing Tompkins a sovereign and Mrs. Skirving a bank note from the plethoric and well-used wallet out of which Mary's rose had fallen the other day.

"Oh, thank you, sir! Would you like to see the children? We do the best we can to make them happy, poor dears!"

Tyson looked through one of the wards in which, according to the matron, they were playing. They all stood still when she entered. All of them were in blue pinafores; all pale-faced, close-cropped and rickety; all shy, apathetic and crushed. He tried to question some of them, but they hung their heads and fingered the edges of their pinafores. They had no such high spirits and ebullient daring as the Arabs he had seen in the square, who, though their rags blew in the wind, had the spice and sport of freedom in their forays, and unflagging interest in their outlawry. The walls were bare, and the air smelt of porridge, plaster and chloride of lime.

The matron took his card, and bowed him out through the lodge. When he had gone she sat down, quite overcome by her emotions.

"Well, I never!" she exclaimed. "And all this to-do about that little brat, Bessie! And to think she's an heiress! As I said to him, I can remember her as well as if she were here now, and as saucy and troublesome a minx as ever was!"

She poured out a cup of tea to soothe herself, and cogitated. "There's one thing, Tompkins; you'll

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never be able to get out to-night, and you'd no right to promise him that you would."

"What's that! Not get out to-night? Oh, indeed!" sneered Tompkins, his hair bristling and his mouth opening. "And why not?"

"Now, no impudence. You know your work's all behind, and there's a meeting of the guardians next week. You've got to do it. I won't have it put off any longer; there now! I'm going into town myself, and I can inquire for Mrs. Twiggs."

"You'll do no such thing! I'll chuck this blessed job. I'm sick and tired of it anyway. I'm going, and going early."

"Now, what's the use of going on like that?" The matron was alarmed. "We can be friendly, can't we? Your interest is my interest, and it may be a good thing for both of us if you can be reasonable. Have some tea?"

And being pacified by the honour of the invitation, Mr. Tompkins took the tea and stirred it with nervous fingers.

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Chapter XIII. In which Tyson Sups with some Arabs : : : :

THE rain ceased, but was followed by a yellow fog, through which early in the afternoon the lamps struggled in bunches of orange mist. Again and again Tyson walked up and down London Road, with its cheap shops in which bargains were cut down by farthings, and explored one after another of the sooty, close, intersecting streets of dark houses, older and formerly more pretentious than those of the morning, but now slipping through the social and economic middle distance between respectable citizenship and that vague borderland in which poverty, crime, and vice intermingle with mutual understanding and tolerance. He watched the people he passed, and as often as he saw an oldish woman in black was tempted to accost her and ask her name.

Youthful memories enabled him to shape the probable appearance of Mrs. Twiggs. She would represent a feeble and unsuccessful but determined aspiration to preserve a show of gentility, and there-

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fore would wear shabby black—a black bonnet, a black gown, both spotty and frowsy, and black gloves, often repaired but still gaping at the finger-tips. Her face would be fishy and red, with watery eyes and a watery mouth, and the purple flush of gin upon it. An unappeasable thirst for more gin would parch and shake her and dry up all her thoughts ; a frayed and bespattered petticoat would hang below her skirt and sweep the mud above the ankles of her shapeless, creaking boots and her sagging, unspeakable stockings.

There were many of that kind in London Road, and when he saw one of them pushed through the swinging doors under the legend of "Grooby's Entire," he caught her before she fell, and steadied her against a wall.

At first she resisted him, and slapped at him spitefully as the instrument of her ejection, and then as she raised her rheumy eyes and looked at him with an effort of intelligence, she stuttered,

" You 're a gemman. Filthy beasts in there. No respect for a lady. I 'll go in again. I 'll teach 'em ! I 'll have the law on 'em, yes, I will. Where 's a p'liceman ? Get a p'liceman ! "

She swirled her petticoats defiantly. " Come 'long ; come 'long now, dearie ! You 're a gemman. Come 'long ; let 's have another two-penn'orth."

" No, no ! We 've had enough—Mrs. Twiggs," said Tyson experimentally.

" Just two penn'orth ; just two, dearie !" she pleaded.

" Not another drop ; not another drop, Mrs. Twiggs. Let us go home ; eh, Mrs. Twiggs ? " said Tyson, reiterating and emphasizing the name.

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The bleary eyes questioned him, and the slatternly figure attempted to straighten itself.

“Mis’ Twiggs, indeed! Who Mis’ Twiggs? I’m no’ Mis’ Twiggs. I’m lady. An’ don’ you call me names; don’ you poke fun at me! You no gemman . . . On’y two penn’orth! No? Bah! You no gemman!” and she broke from him and pitched around a corner.

“Oh Bessie, Bessie! Where are you?” cried Tyson bitterly to himself. “Why did n’t I come sooner?”

The home-going hour arrived, and the crowd was reanimated and enlivened and reinforced by the stream of clerks, warehousemen and mechanics flowing with thoughts of rest and comfort towards pleasant little parlours, kitchen fires and refreshing slumber. Of all the workaday hours this is the cheeriest in town and city, for care is dispelled awhile, and the promise of rest or recreation gives elasticity to the step and buoyancy to the mind. The toilers puffed their briar and clay pipes, and dropped into the tobacconists for fresh supplies of “bird’s-eye” or “shag.”

They strode along singly and in twos and threes, chattering as they passed, or when they were girls or women they loitered now and then to contemplate some marvel of millinery in straw, tulle and roses, or plush, ribbons, feathers and most deceptive brilliants at from “five and six to eight and eleven pence three farthings”—always just a farthing less than the additional shilling which had the illusion of non-existence in the paring of the price and the arrangement of the figures. Not only did they stream along the pavement, but they filled the many-coloured and whirring “trams” inside and outside

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when they were going greater distances, and while he watched them pressing homeward a-foot and a-wheel Tyson felt like an outcast, and a gnawing sense of loneliness plucked at his heart and pulled all its strings.

“Oh Bessie, Bessie!” he cried again. “If I could only think that you were among them!”

Very soon all of them were gone, and the street was given to the prowlers about the public-houses and the urchins selling papers, matches and shoe-laces, who had neither meal-times nor homes to invite them.

Two boys and a girl, bare-footed, bare-headed and half naked, stood at the gates of paradise, and blinked in the outer darkness at the radiance within: it was the window of a little cook-shop, wherein pork was a staple, in the form of ham, pies, head-cheese and sausage rolls. An attendant sat by the counter—a girl in a light blue bolero jacket, with tinkling gilt buttons, and a sailor hat, covered with black oil-cloth, cocked above two dark, smoothly brushed discs of raven hair, which made semi-circles on her cheeks and concealed her ears.

“Children, are you hungry?” said Tyson, approaching the group. “Come in with me.”

They eyed him between suspicion and incredulity, but he gently pushed them through the door and seated them at a table covered with well-worn oil-cloth.

“Now then, what is it to be—a little of everything or all of something? Speak out; but not all at once.”

The attendant put down her novel, and smiled. She was not unused to freaks of this kind, for in

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London Road you may often see returned colonists and sailors in fits of maudlin benevolence, making free with their money—even scattering it to the rabble by the handful—and splendidly entertaining all comers.

She thought Tyson could not be sober, and was ready to humour his extravagance.

Plate after plate of the blushing ham, pie after pie, and slab after slab of the mysterious head-cheese, were brought with incredible insufficiency to those voracious appetites, and though Tyson attempted conversation he could get no other response to what he said than an inarticulate gasp and the widest grin possible in conjunction with distended cheeks and full mouths. Reaching for another pie, the girl delayed it between the plate and her open mouth to roll adoration at him from her eyes, and when the boys could find a chance they winked at him and smiled with a significance beyond that of any sign in the whole arcana of free-masonry.

People were peering in at the door, and among them appeared from time to time the head of a dubious policeman. Then Tyson became aware that a young clergyman, who had entered unobserved, was standing at his elbow, and smiling at the feast. His black clothes were very shabby, but his face was as rosy and as wholesome as a boy's, and so full of vivacity and good-humour that it was impossible to take offence at the intrusion. He looked hardly more than a boy in years, but was close to Tyson's own age.

"I say, this is a treat!" he exclaimed. "I declare it makes my mouth water! May I have a slice of that ham?"

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“Sit down; sit down!” said Tyson, making room for him. “By all means.”

The clergyman was no stranger to the children, and he called them by their names,—Nolan, Cropsey and Quirk, Nolan being the girl. They looked at him sidewise, with uncertainty as to his approval.

“It’s contrary to rules,” he said, “but after all Christ did not refer the needy to any bureau, or hold His hand until He made inquiries.”

“I know what you mean,” rejoined Tyson. “I know that this sort of thing has no permanent effect, and may even do mischief in prolonging dependence on chance—but they looked so very hungry!”

“And you could n’t wait to investigate—Nolan, pass the mustard, please—but had to feed them there and then. Well, you haven’t damaged them to any extent; I really believe you have n’t. A full belly casts out iniquity. You are surely going to be good to-morrow, are n’t you, children?”

The three heads bobbed and flashed a covenant at Tyson.

“That’s a promise, and if you break it—”

Quirk plunged into a vicarious responsibility for the pact by turning threateningly on the other two and vehemently declaring,

“If yer break it, kids, I’ll smash yer in the jaw!”

Tyson bought the remainder of their stocks of shoe-laces and matches, and when they were gone he again sat down with the clergyman, drawn to him by the simplicity and cheerfulness of his manner.

“You seem to know them all,” said Tyson.

“Nearly all. I’ve been here five years—ever since I left Oxford. It’s an endless job, and the results are never quite satisfying.”

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“Now, those—have they got homes to go to?”

“Nolan, Quirk and Cropsey? They have roofs to shelter them, if they choose to go, but the conditions are so abominable that one cannot blame them when they prefer the better air and greater quiet of a barrel or a doorway, as they usually do unless it is very cold or very wet.”

“But are there no refuges where they can be properly looked after?”

“There are refuges—I shall be glad to show you one—but except in extreme cases such children cannot be taken away from their parents, nor on the whole is it advisable to take them away while there is any acknowledgment of parental responsibility. The root of the whole matter in dealing with poverty, as I see it—few disagree with me—is in insistence on the preservation of the sense of responsibility and the spirit of independence. It is very difficult to relieve without undermining both of these essential qualities and producing pauperism. For weeks to come Nolan, Quirk and Cropsey will give more attention to the discovery of generosity like yours than to the sale of their papers and shoe-laces. That is the discouraging part of it. Not that I reproach you,” he added, with a winning smile. “Far from it! When I came out to-night I was all out of sorts, but now having met you I am quite myself again.”

“I guess you are right; Independence is a martinet, but her discipline is a good thing,” Tyson acquiesced, and then, “You do n’t happen to know a child, or rather, a young woman now—named Bessie Tyson?”

“No.”

“Nor a Mrs. Twiggs?”

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“No, but I might hear of them. Shall I inquire?”

As they left the little cook-shop they were surrounded by a fresh arrival of ragamuffins, to whom Nolan, Quirk and Cropsey had communicated the news of their good fortune.

“There you are!” cried the clergyman. “It is like baling a sinking boat when the water is gaining on you all the time, or like weeds that grow much faster than you can pluck them. But for faith in God!— Let us go. I hate to say it, but it is not wise for you to encourage them any more to-night.”

He and Tyson escaped into one of the side streets, and soon reached a huge barracks gloomily towering to five stories, with its undraped windows all darkened.

“Come in for a moment,” the clergyman urged, and Tyson followed him through the hall and up a flight of sanded stairs. In the corridors were small lockers, and in them, or outside them, were the clothing, wares and implements of shoe-blacks, newsboys and vendors of matches, shoe-laces and hat-guards. The gas was low, but by it Tyson could make out an inscription over a doorway at the head of the stairs: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me.”

They peered in, and in the dimness the floor seemed to be gently up-heaving and breathing like a calm sea, with living things rising and falling on its surface. Another story and another were the same, and produced that compassion which the mystery, helplessness and unconsciousness of sleepers awakens in those who watch.

“Look!” whispered Tyson’s guide. “Altogether we have more than a thousand of them. There’s

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not a nook or corner from cellar to roof unoccupied, excepting the dining-room. The sanitary authorities have absolutely forbidden us to put up even one more cot."

The windows were all open, and a breeze blowing through them purified the air. The walls were bare, but freshened with whitewash; the uncarpeted floors were scrubbed to a polish.

Then Tyson was led into a cubicle where a reading-lamp was burning and a coal fire spluttered in a small grate. A hanging book-shelf held Thomas A'Kempis, the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, a Greek Testament, and a few classics. A Bible and a prayer-book were closer at hand, and over the mantle hung an ivory and ebony crucifix. A narrow iron bedstead such as servants use was crowded against the wall.

"Do sit down and let us have a smoke," said the host removing his coat and changing it for a loose cassock. "I want to tell you of a dream of mine. Buildings like this cost too much even in the country; in the town they are ruinous. Land is dear—bricks and mortar put together in the simplest forms cost enormously. Now, what is cheap? What will make as good a shelter at the least cost? Why, old ships! Old ships that are no longer fit for voyages but are perfectly safe in harbours, can be bought for a song; they are worth only what they will bring as junk. Why, every month in the year you can buy even an outworn ocean steamer for a few thousand pounds—think of it!"

His face glowed through the smoke with boyish enthusiasm. "What I propose is to buy up old ships, and anchor them in the shallows of the river, and

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make them refuges for such waifs as we have met to-night. Do you see? Is n't that a good idea? Moorings cost nothing, and a little paint and some boards and hammocks would comprise all the alterations necessary. Think how easy control and discipline would be; think of the fresh air and the fresh tides—all the ozone and all the space—and the wholesome surroundings, the contrast with the slums!"

He put his hands on his knees and eagerly watched Tyson's face. "If it were only as lodgings for the night, and we sent them ashore for the day, how much better it would be in every way than what we are doing now—how much cheaper; and then consider the sanitary advantages! I do not propose to make sailors of them all, though seamanship and navigation would be included in the instruction. With two clear decks and the hammocks stowed, there would be room for everything—we could teach trades—and no rentals, no taxes, no mortgages!"

"That's a good plan," assented Tyson. "Have you figured the cost of an experiment?"

"To be sure! Here it all is. It would be an experiment, but I believe I've got it down almost to a penny."

An elaborate estimate was quickly drawn from a portfolio and placed in Tyson's hands. An old barque that would easily accommodate one hundred boys could be bought for less than eight hundred pounds—re-fitting and alterations would cost as much more; a small endowment would suffice for maintenance, as nearly all the boys would be required to pay something for their food and lodging out of their earnings.

"How does it strike you? I hope it impresses you favourably?" the young cleric murmured.

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"It's a good idea," replied Tyson. "Let me think it over. Possibly I can help you."

"How good of you! I had not thought of that—I only thought that it might interest you by its novelty. Are you staying in town long? If you are we are sure to meet. Do come and see me again."

He led Tyson downstairs to the entrance, where, with a vigorous hand-shake before parting, he said, "I shall hope to see you again."

Tyson then returned to his hotel. He was impatient to inquire for Tompkins.

He had not to wait long, but when that young man appeared it was not with Mrs. Twiggs, but with another youth of his own age and class.

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Chapter XIV. An Amateur Detective.

TYSON was seated in the lounge, and rose to meet them.

“No news?” he asked at once.

“Just a word to begin with, if you please, sir, just a word. Business is business, and I thought—yes—I thought as we’d better have a witness.”

“A witness? What for? What do you mean?”

“Well, this gentleman, my friend, Mr. Frisbie—an understanding, sir.”

Mr. Frisbie shuffled his feet and twirled his cap. Tompkins hesitated between embarrassment and cunning.

“You see, sir, not that everything between us is n’t aboveboard—but what you said at the work-house this afternoon—as a matter of business, would you—Mr. Frisbie’s a business man himself, you see—would you mind just saying over again in the presence of Mr. Frisbie what you said this afternoon?”

His blotchy forehead twitched and moistened, and his little red eyes slanted and shifted inconstantly.

Tyson himself was now suspicious and irritated. “I said that if you found Mrs. Twiggs I would make

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it well worth your while, did n't I ? Those were my words, and I mean them. Have you found her?—quick ! ”

Tompkins started and coughed. “ If I produce her,” he said, borrowing the word from the detective stories he had read, “ what will it be worth ? ”

“ Ah ! That 's it, is it ? Now, suppose I tell the pair of you to go about your business—turn you out ? That 's what you deserve.”

Both Frisbie and Tompkins were not sure that a hand was not already on their collars.

“ You see, I have been done so often in them missing word competitions—and in other things, too,” Tompkins pleaded.

“ Well, you go and fetch her here at once, and I 'll give you ten pounds. I 'd have done better than that by you if you 'd been decent—if you 'd trusted me. Step lively ! I 'll wait here. I know you 've got her.”

Mrs. Twiggs was seated, as Tyson observed, in a contiguous public house, and when Tompkins led her into the hall of the hotel Tyson gave him the promised reward and sharply dismissed him.

“ If I should be able to find the other one, sir,” whispered Tompkins, at the last moment, endeavouring to effect another bargain,—“ what would that be worth ? ”

“ I do n't believe in you,” Tyson replied gruffly, “ but if you do that you shall have twenty, fifty—yes, a hundred pounds.”

He had made no great mistake in prefiguring Mrs. Twiggs' appearance. She was very much like the old woman he had met in London Road, though tidier, and sober.

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“Sit down, ma’am. I want to ask you about Bessie Tyson, and intend to make it worth your while if you can give me any information that will enable me to find her.”

“Oh, I was always so fond of that girl, sir! She was real genteel, quite superior like. I always thought she belonged by rights to nice people, she was that superior—quite the lady, she was! I’m sure I could n’t have done better by her if she’d been my own daughter. I’d often say, ‘Now Bessie, dear, you must be tired. Let me do that,’ or ‘Bessie, dear, do go out and get a breath of fresh hair,’ or ‘You must ‘ave an ‘oliday Sunday’—quite as if she’d been a child of my own.”

She spoke in a whimpering voice, and confirmed her affection by dabbing her eyes with a shocking remnant of a cotton handkerchief.

“Where is she now? That’s what I want to know,” Tyson demanded.

“Ah, that I can’t say, sir.”

“When did you see her last?”

“Not since she left me.”

“How long ago was that—can’t you remember?”

“Now, let me see; I’d left Worrall Street—I could n’t afford it—and it was n’t in Croxteth Street, because I’d that impudent minx of an Ellen Wagstaffe there—she as got me into all that trouble—”

“Trouble? What trouble?”

Mrs. Twiggs dabbed her eyes again. “They’re always taking advantage of a poor woman,” she snivelled. “It was all a pack of lies, it was, every word of it! She spread it, the ungrateful ‘ussy, as I abused her—beat her and did n’t give her enough to eat—Me!—Me as is kindness itself to them and spoils

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them so as they are surprised when they get to other situations. She was such a liar—excuse me, sir—that she quite imposed on the police and the magistrates!

“No,” she went on, “it was n’t in Croxteth Street, and it was n’t in Marine Villas—I didn’t stay there long, the rent was that ’igh—and it was n’t in Hoy-lake Crescent.”

It was evident to Tyson that she was what is called in American politics a “floater.”

“Ah, now, I’ve got it, sir,” she decided. “It was in Smithwick Terrace; that’s where it was—a beautiful house, you’d say if you saw it, sir, but the drains was n’t right, and that’s the reason I gave it up. ’Ealth is everythink, and I’m so partic’lar.”

“In Smithwick Terrace. I heard that; but how long ago?”

She counted five on the finger-tips visible through her gloves. “Five years ago, come next November—that was it.”

“You took boarders there, and Elizabeth—Bessie was maid-of-all-work in your house?”

“Yes, sir; I ’ad to, me ’usband being gone—not that I was brought up to any such think. I was born a lady, I was. When my ’usband was alive we ’ad a semi-detached villa at Knotty Ash, and kept our own page and a gig, we did indeed, sir.”

“How many boarders had you at a time?”

“Well, when we was full there might be eight—all nice gentlemen, and very respectable every one of them. There was Mr. Jebbs, him as is now pantry steward in the ‘Marmora,’ and Mr. Griggs as is quartermaster in the ‘Caliph,’ and—”

“Never mind about that. Bessie did all the work, did n’t she?”

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“She was a ‘ard worker, and no mistake, she was. Not that I ever imposed on her, poor gal ! She was n’t the sort as can be imposed on ; very ‘igh spreated. ‘Now Bessie, do sit down and rest yourself an’ ‘ave a cup of tea,’ I’d say to her, or ‘You’ve done all as you oughter do to-day, Bessie, my love. Do n’t you want to go out and look at the shops and buy some little think for yourself ? There’s the money, dear’ — quite like as if she’d been my own child.”

Tyson listened intently, nodding his head now and then, and sighing, but sifting the probabilities as they presented themselves under the cloud of Mrs. Twiggs’ glibness.

“She must have been very fond of you, poor child !” he said craftily. “How did she come to leave you ? I hope she was grateful to you.”

“Oh, gals, even the best of them, will get notions into their ‘eads ; they ‘ear so much and read them papers so nowadays. You see, it was all along of her talking with them minxes in the neighbours’ ‘ouses, jangling as they do morning, noon and night.”

“You did n’t discharge her ? I hope it was n’t as bad as that ?” Tyson asked, with more dissimulation than he had ever practised in all his life before.

“Discharge her ? Oh no, sir ! I’d ‘ave ‘ad her with me now, and been glad to, if it ‘ad been me. I miss her even yet, she was such a nice gal, though she was that ‘igh-sperited.”

“She did give you notice when she was going ?”

“Let me see ! No, I can’t say as she did, but I did n’t mind that, sir, though it did hurt me bad, it did, I being so fond of her, poor child !”

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“Ran away, did she—like Ellen Wagstaffe? But Bessie made no trouble for you with the police, eh? That showed how she appreciated your kindness—that she had some decency about her.”

A sterile tear trickled down Mrs. Twiggs’ wrinkles as she shrewdly scanned Tyson’s cryptic visage. “Wild ‘osses could n’t drag a word out of me against Bessie,” she vowed.

“And you never saw her—never heard of her again after she left you?”

“No, poor darling. I was nigh heart-broke about it.”

She looked rather sourly and depreciatingly at the coin he gave her, and sniffing and gathering her bedraggled skirts, she crept down the steps of the hotel and vanished in the lingering yellow fog.

The wind was rising again, and between the wings of the tattered clouds flying inland from the sea hung a few pale stars. The lamps threw flashes of light on the wet sidewalk, and fumbled with long tremulous fingers in the churning of slippery mud. Above the rattle of wheels and the shuffle of feet could still be heard the shrill cries of the hawkers. Spots of flaring colours were added to the dingy throng by tawdry, flaunting, painted women.

Tyson recalled Culvercombe and all its pleasant surroundings—the sweet air of the downs and their sleepy undulations; the violet sea; the gently surging, billowy foliage—as a distant dream, and in his awakening he seemed to have toiled down as a penance into another world of a heavy-faced and joyless people, groping in mire and gloom. And the sacrifice and the pain had been to no purpose; for Bessie, after all his efforts, was still no nearer to him, and

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still she eluded alike his yearnings and all his devices to recover her.

The inspiration of one thing more to be done drew him into the writing-room, and there he wondered that he had not thought of it sooner. He would advertise. Why had so obvious a resource not been thought of before? Why had not Leathley, Leathley and Leathley, the solicitors, suggested it?

Two days later, when Lord Langdale and Pewster were resting after a game in the billiard room of Langdale Hall, Pewster picked up a London paper and glanced at it between sips of his whiskey and soda.

Lord Langdale was dozing. He bore an evasive resemblance to Julian, without the younger brother's beauty, refinement, or amiability. Projecting eyes and a coarse-lipped mouth were the most prominent features in his flabby and flushed face. The resemblance was blurred, perplexing and tantalizing, like one image superimposed on another in a so-called "composite" portrait.

An advertisement caught Pewster's eye and he shook the paper to call his companion's attention to it.

"What is it? What do you want now?" his lordship demanded testily.

"That's the fellow I've been talking to you about — Tyson, Julian's friend! I'll bet ten to a hundred it's him. Listen — let me read it to you. *A very liberal reward will be paid for any information as to the whereabouts of Elizabeth Tyson, who about five years ago was employed as a maid-of-all-work in the service of Mrs. Adelbert Twiggs, at No. 13, Smithwick Terrace, Wakeport. Communicate with Messrs.*

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Leathley, Leathley and Leathley, 201 Lincoln's Inn Fields, W. C.

Pewster let the paper fall by his chair in his enjoyment, and laughed hoarsely. "That's the girl he used to talk about—a slavey, a little girl of all work! Damn him! Is n't it delicious! That's the gentleman who wants Culvercombe—that called me down in the train the other day! Did n't I tell you he was born in the gutter? Yes, born in the gutter, by God!"

Lord Langdale yawned, and as he closed his eyes, drawled nonchalantly, "Well, well—what of it? Is n't that where all you fellows were born? You can't surprise me by anything of that kind, Pewster."

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Chapter XV. In which Pewster Contemplates Revenge : : : :

ENCOURAGED by the thought that what he was doing would please Mary Leigh, though this was not of course the leading motive, Tyson remained in the neighbourhood of Wakeport several weeks longer, and continued his quest. Mary had become a subtle power in his life, and without realizing it he submitted himself to the compulsion of an influence which he hardly dared to acknowledge. He was agitated by a vague unrest which made every day seem incomplete and disappointing from some omission or vacancy ; he could not concentrate himself on anything, and was pulled and chafed this way and that by unseen strings ; the sky was overhead, but as with a newly caught bird, there were bars between him and his longing.

He scoured the highways and byways of his native place, and penetrated beyond into the smaller villages and towns, all lying under the smoky pall of manufactures and mining. The paths and lanes were made of cinders ; the struggling green of the foliage was powdered with coal dust and soot, and old half-

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timbered farm-houses and red sandstone manor houses stood in shrunken acres, their meadows, gardens and orchards absorbed by the collieries, with heaps of slag in place of hay-ricks, and blackened scaffolds in place of trees. The grass withered in the poison of chemicals and the tall chimneys flung out pennons and columns of smoke. Rows and rows of two-roomed cottages of plaster, slate and brick, were peopled by slatternly women and filthy children, and surly begrimed men crowded against the walls and puffed their pipes between the "shifts" in the galleried, tunnelled, honey-combed recesses of the lightless world below in which they spent their working hours.

Every glimpse of poverty and squalor created new torments for Tyson in the thought of the cruel possibilities of Bessie's fate.

The advertisement produced a flood of letters, but none of them contained any satisfying information. The name of Elizabeth Tyson was common everywhere, and particularly in Wakeport and its neighbourhood. Twenty bearers of it presented themselves at the offices of Leathley, Leathley and Leathley, with a reckless ambition to be identified as the person sought, regardless of consequences and oblivious of antecedents, and they looked upon themselves as victims of a heartless hoax, and demanded money for their railway journeys, their time and trouble, their immediate and future necessities, when they were rejected, though none of them could establish a knowledge of the motherly care and benevolence of Mrs. Adelbert Twiggs.

Mrs. Skirving grew more peevish with the children and servants of the workhouse than usual, and pro-

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crastinated her duties in making trips to town and inquiries that might entitle her to a share of Tyson's munificence. Tompkins schemed like a sanguine spider in a freshly spun web on a breathless dog-day morning. His gambling and "competitions" were put aside and he quarrelled with his friend Frisbie, who, caught by the contagion of the search, was proving too meddlesome. Dropping other recreations, Tompkins plied himself and plumed himself in the exhilarating and esoteric activities of an avocation which he regarded as secret service. He had not read detective stories and police reports to no purpose, and he slyly nursed the germ of a plot which kept him awake at night and made his eyes redder and more "ratty" than ever in the morning. . . . If the real Elizabeth could not be produced it would not be impossible to find a "double" for her, and groping in the contingent maze he conspired for better profits than any yet spoken or dreamed of.

Nor was the advertisement merely read and then dismissed from the mind of Pewster. Pinned to a cushion it was constantly under the eye of the mushroom financier as he sat at his desk in his luxuriantly appointed offices in Lombard Street. Other papers involving millions and many spectacular enterprises were there in files and bundles, but above them and between his calendar and his clock the little newspaper clipping stood out, to be read and gloated over as often as he encountered it. The satisfaction it gave him was not lessened when he read after his return from Langdale Hall a letter from Leathley, Leathley and Leathley, begging to inform him that they were instructed by Lady Cheam to say that she could not accept his obliging offer for Culvercombe,

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as she had made other arrangements than those proposed for renting that estate.

“I’ll pay her up for that,” he swore, “and him too.”

And when he went home he said savagely to his wife, “There are such a lot of flunkies about this house that I’ll bet you a fiver you do n’t even know the names of all of them. Do you now?”

Mrs. Pewster’s hands, still big and red from the drudgery of her own housework in a “maisonette” in Clapham, had resisted the arts of manicure, but she held in them a lorgnette of gold and diamonds, which she raised with the best air of a stage duchess.

“Oh, do n’t try those monkey tricks on me—they do n’t go!” her husband protested. “Just find out—that’s all I want you to do. Find out if we’ve got an Elizabeth Tyson in the scullery or the kitchen—that’s where she belongs. Tell the butler to inquire—show him that advertisement—tell him that I’m a friend of Mr. Tyson’s and take an interest in the girl. My God! What a joke it would be if we could get her into our service!”

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Chapter XVI. In which a Difficulty is Removed : : : : :

WHEN Tyson revisited Culvercombe it was as a tenant, but Lady Cheam remained undisturbed as mistress of the household—an arrangement which gave occasion for some raillery between them.

“Really, now, I feel as if I were standing on the edge of a precipice, like somebody in one of those wicked French novels. I like going to the edge and peeping down—I always did ; it gives me such a delicious thrill—and what does it matter so long as one keeps one’s head ? People who can’t keep their heads lose so much pleasure in life—they are always coming to grief. I’ve always had a strong head and known how to say, ‘So far and no farther’—it’s really indispensable—but one need n’t say it too soon.”

“All I can say, Lady Cheam, is that I’m satisfied with the arrangement if you are. It’s very good of you to save me so much trouble. Just regard me as a boarder, or what they call a paying guest. Do what you like—order what you please, invite whom

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you please—except Pewster. We don't want him, do we?"

"No, certainly not. He sent me a very uncivil letter."

"Keep the house full," Tyson continued. "I like it; the more the merrier."

"Gleg?"

"I don't mind. There's more in what he says than I thought there was. I've seen the prosperous gin-drinking neighbourhood."

"Lord and Lady Romer?"

"If you like; though her voice jars me. I feel like stepping aside when I hear it—it sounds like the rattle of a snake on the plains."

"How clever you are! That describes it exactly. I never heard a rattlesnake rattle, but I can imagine it. You've heard it in the West thousands of times, of course."

"Oh, you need n't be on the plains to hear it. I'm afraid it can be heard wherever men and women are."

"Oh, you cynic! That trip to the north has not agreed with you."

"It was n't much of a success; I'll own that much, but I have n't given up hoping yet."

"The Duke of Mercia?" said Lady Cheam, sounding him further as to possible guests. "He has often been down in September."

"I was n't cut out for association with royalty."

"He dotes on Americans," said Lady Cheam.

"All right," replied Tyson.

She ran through several other nominations, which he delegated to her own pleasure.

"And Miss Leigh and the bishop"—he suggested.

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“Can’t you get them here? Let’s have all of them we can, eh?”

“Oh, Mary is a cousin, you know. She always makes herself at home here. Hardly a week passes that she does n’t come over from Winsbury.”

Lady Cheam accompanied this information with a smile of comprehension, not without sagacity and not without prejudice.

“You won’t say a word to her about any change—any arrangement?” said Tyson.

“Not if you do n’t wish it.”

“Not a word. It might embarrass her—it might keep her away. I like her. But remember, you are queen here.”

“No; you are king here. I am prime minister.”

“No,” Tyson insisted; “I’m only the boarder; and by the way,” he added, as he went to a small table and filled a check, “you ought to have some of the board money in advance, and I must settle with you on account of those shares of the Queen of Sheba you bought. I’ve sold them.”

“Did you? Did they go up?”

“Just a little—only five points.”

“That shows a profit, does n’t it?” her ladyship asked, breathing quickly with the rapturous anticipation of a child in a toy-shop.

“A trifle—enough to keep the wolf away from the door.”

“Tell me how much—do!” she urged.

He handed her the check, and when she glanced at the figures she glided towards him and patted his cheek.

“Oh, you dear!” she cried. “You are ever so much cleverer and nicer than that creature Pewster. I’m glad you told me about him.”

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The odour of flowers, the silvery twitter of the robins, the glow of strong sunshine, again filled the luxurious drawing-room, and Tyson looked with the satisfaction of possession on the embossed and panelled ceiling, the tapestried walls, the marble columns and buttresses of the high canopied mantel, the graceful forms of the furniture in gold and pale tints of brocade and damask, and the iridescent jars full of long-stemmed blooms.

Midsummer was over ; there were fewer flowers in the garden ; the foliage was touched with bronze, and rifts between the leaves opened hitherto unseen gleams of sea and sky. The wine of autumn was mounting in the woodbine under the eaves. But where the June roses had been, gladioli now rose in flamboyant streams ; the fuchsias glowed like coals of fire, and spilt their life-blood in pools on the ground ; honeysuckle and geraniums climbed over porch and windowsill ; the mountain ash was strung with coral berries ; asters of every colour lined every path ; drifts of crimson valerian flowed along the solid grey stone retaining walls of the sunken lanes between the gardens ; and the magnolias in moon-like whiteness unfolded their chalices to the warmth of noon.

While Tyson was feeding a tame robin at one of the windows Lady Cheam beckoned him. She was excited by something she had just read in the morning newspaper.

“ Listen to this ; listen to this ! ” she cried, and as he approached her he assumed that she had fallen on his own advertisement. He had not spoken of that to her, and he shrank now from it as a revelation of ignominy greater than she or anybody could surmise

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without an extinction of respect. What she pointed at, however, was "Naval and Military Intelligence," and the paragraph she read merely stated that the 9th Lancers had been ordered to India.

"His regiment—his regiment—Captain Hugh Dunmail's," she explained. "It is he who has made threats against Julian, and made me so ill. And now, thank God! he is going away, and Julian, poor boy, can come home."

"I do n't understand."

"Oh, he's a perfect little monster—a creepy, crawly little man, with a whispering voice like an usher's in a church, and nobody to speak of, but a big white head with eyes like gimlets, and the instincts of a savage."

Tyson's face was still blank.

"The brother of Gerald Dunmail, you know—the brother-in-law of that idiot of a woman who made all that trouble."

Tyson laughed indulgently.

"Is it as serious as all that? That does n't sound like England—going to draw a gun on Julian!"

"But he's one of those Highlanders—they'll do anything. They are less than half civilized. They are as primitive as monkeys, and as ferocious as tigers. Oh, how I detest them! And this little creature, Hugh Dunmail, is full of all sorts of barbaric ideas of revenge. He ought to be sent to a lunatic asylum instead of to India, but thank God he's going somewhere, and Julian can come home! Only think of it," she went on, when she recovered her breath, "the poor boy has been away since May, and now it's September! You must telegraph to him and tell him; or shall I do it?"

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“I haven’t got his address. I asked Miss Plant for it, but she didn’t answer. He was to write to me, but he hasn’t. I’ll try another cable right now. I want to see the dear old man again.”

“He has his faults,” Lady Cheam confessed, with a tear.

“He’s a man,” Tyson admitted.

“So affectionate! So amiable! So handsome! He hasn’t my prudence—my head—my resolution.”

“Too good-natured; that’s it,” Tyson affirmed.

“Too easily persuaded and misled; too generous to say ‘no.’ Langdale and I have much more strength of character. I really surprise myself sometimes by the way I say ‘no.’ There’s everything in the way one does that, isn’t there? It’s the foundation of character, I say; but it’s a struggle!”

The memory of rare psychological moments in which the negative had prevailed drew a deep sigh from Lady Cheam. “Oh, those two little letters deprive us of so much pleasure!” she murmured. “They snatch away our chiffon and put us in hair shirts; but one must—one MUST say them—now and then!”

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Chapter XVII. In which Tyson Visits the Bishop : : : : : : :

FROM that afternoon on, Culvercombe was filled with guests, and there were few among them, except Lady Romer and Lady Hilda Horsham, who did not take to Tyson. Though the racy slang of the West flavoured his speech he never failed in good taste, and he rapidly acquired a new ease of bearing as he became accustomed to his surroundings.

He found an opportunity to tell Mary of the failure of his search, and she listened quietly to him with that look in her face which lay there as elusively as light on a white flower. In that look her face seemed to Tyson to melt into an essence like that of a compassionate angel. He told her of his failure without disclosing all the circumstances ; he could not bring himself to tell her what Bessie had been—to reveal all the misery of that lost life in Wakeport. He taunted himself with the suppression, but he could not shock her and humiliate himself by revealing to her all the details. He must—he would—some time, but not yet. So he hinted and suggested, but checked himself before he reached

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a confession which might evoke pity, but would cover him with shame.

Tyson's rugged visage has already been spoken of. He was not handsome ; but when he was amused his laugh bubbled as naturally as a spring, and when his sympathies were touched his eyes sparkled with transfiguring kindness. As a rule his geniality disguised or cloaked what was irregular in his features, and the readiest and most frequent description of him was the simplest—"a pleasant-looking man."

He smiled and listened to the people around him, and sometimes under pressure talked cheerfully of the West—of Nona and the Senator ; of plains as vast as oceans ; of dewless skies thrilling with stars at night and domed in cloudless azure by day ; of the illusive distances and spaces in which mountains and *mesas* seemed to follow the horseman as he went away from them ; of the singing of the cottonwoods in *arroyas* and cañons ; and of the glitter of the manzanita and the scent of giant pines. Memory and affection tugged his heart strings, but his heart itself clung to the present scene for more reasons than could be found in the serenity of the landscape and all the fascination of England's mellow beauty.

The women spoke of him over their tea-cups.

"He does n't seem like a cowboy at all," said Lady Hilda Horsham, one of those girls with long waists, stooping shoulders, and aquiline features, who have a vogue in England through a prevailing, though a perverted, taste for the angular in feminine form.

"He is n't a cowboy," Mary retorted. "He 's a mining engineer."

"Is n't he rather primitive," Lady Hilda persisted.

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“Have another piece of sugar,” said Mary replenishing her interlocutor’s cup.

“He blushes; it’s so funny. I saw him blush when you spoke to him yesterday, Mary,” tittered Gladys Compton, the youngest of the party, a dollish girl with blue eyes and yellow hair. “He was thinking, and when you turned to him at dessert he blushed and nearly upset his wine glass. I suppose he was ashamed of being so absent-minded. Blushing is embarrassing, is n’t it? I do n’t see why he should blush, though.”

“But perhaps you were mistaken,” rejoined Mary. “Do let me give you another muffin, Gladys. Some toast, Alice?”

She held the toast towards Lady Romer, who had covered her with a probing gaze of interrogation, which she met with open and imperturbable eyes.

“He has no distinction—none of them have,” her ladyship declared. “How can they be otherwise? But we idealize all of them. If a man herds cattle in England, or drives them to market, he is a herdsman or a drover, and keeps his place as one of the lowest of creatures; but when he’s in America and is called a cowboy we are asked to believe he becomes something heroic. Ridiculous! For my part, I’d as soon choose my guests from Smithfield as from Omaha or Denver, or any such pig-stys.”

“Mr. Tyson is not a cowboy,” Mary repeated impatiently, “and—”

Gladys intervened at this moment. “There’s a book on blushing, Mary; I saw it advertised the other day. Do you think it would be interesting?”

Lady Hilda laughed. “What is the name of it, Gladys?”

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“‘Why we Blush,’ I think.”

“Then get it by all means. It might explain what Mary keeps to herself.”

“All this nonsense because somebody blushes!” said Lady Cheam. “Is it so extraordinary? When I was a girl blushing was not so rare as it is nowadays.”

“Perhaps there was more occasion for it when you were a girl, Cousin Julia,” Lady Hilda murmured.

“Not nearly so much. Girls were girls then.”

“And what are they now?”

“Like bad boys.”

“Come, cousin!” continued Lady Hilda, “all the paragons do not belong to previous generations.”

“But what were we talking about?” Lady Cheam inquired in the maze of irrelevancy.

“Mr. Tyson,” said Gladys. “Isn’t he extraordinary? He’s so fond of poetry. Why, he knows Tennyson like—like a book. And all the poets—but especially Tennyson. When we were riding to Godshill the other day he recited all that part about Excalibur. He knew it by heart. I didn’t know what Excalibur was till then. I thought it was one of those Highland games.”

“Yes, they are great readers in America,” said Mary.

“He is quite uneducated,” snapped Lady Romer. “I could see at dinner last night, when Romer spoke of Horace and quoted one of the eclogues, that he did not understand a word of it; and he was also at sea when it came to Greek.”

“Uneducated as Shakespeare was uneducated,” Mary suggested.

“Now I remember,” exclaimed Gladys. “That

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was when he blushed—when Lord Romer talked to him in Latin."

"Ah! I see!" cried Hilda. "He was ashamed of being such a dunce."

"Really, Hilda," said Mary haughtily, "you ought to be more sympathetic with dunces."

"Mary, you are a pig!" Hilda protested.

"Hilda, you are a viper!" retorted Mary.

And then they both laughed, Hilda drily, Mary without animosity and with the clearness of a bell.

"Where are we—what were we talking about?" murmured Lady Cheam, from an easy chair in which she had been dozing.

"Mr. Tyson," explained Gladys again.

"Oh, yes; he's a perfect dear. When I was a girl—" and Lady Cheam fell asleep again.

Hilda strove for the final word. "He's not 'the real thing.' 'The real thing' would have 'bluffed' Lord Romer and in the end convinced him, or at least the listeners, that he was all wrong, or that there was no such language as Latin. The Americans carry everything by 'bluffing'—there is no end to it; it bowls you over, individuals and nations, like a cannon ball. Now from what he has told me of Nona, as he calls her, she must be 'the real thing'; but he—Mr. Tyson—is not star-spangled enough for my taste. I really cannot understand what you see in him, Mary."

Mary was tempted to reply, but though she had the courage of her convictions, it dawned on her that she had already been drawn into a sufficiently definite attitude, and she merely allowed herself to say,

"*Nec scire fas est omnia*, Hilda. You can learn that in any dictionary, but perhaps I'd better trans-

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late it for you, dear. It means that we are not permitted to know all things."

The men who came (including Lord Romer) were polite to Tyson, but he would have been better pleased could he have been sure that the interest they showed in him dwelt in his personality. He was too shrewd to deceive himself in that respect, and he was amused to see how roundabout the ways were which led to Sheba.

The inquiries were not direct, nor were they made in the course of open conversation. Each man chose his own time, and shaped his own preamble. The deplorable state of agriculture ; war office scandals ; the American invasion ; the fall in consols ; the price of coal ; the decay of England ; the income tax ; and the death duties—talk begun on these and as various topics had a way of drifting to the foot of Manaña and making a goal of Sheba.

Whenever he was alone with another man Tyson got used to having him come to the mine, and it was reached sooner or later with as little appearance of premeditation as of proper sequence. A casual "Oh, by the way—" or "Speaking of the States—" prepared Tyson for the inevitable question. Now it was in the billiard-room between shots in the evening, when under the strong reflectors the coloured balls lay like scattered carnations on a greensward, or in the kennels in the afternoon, when the points of a setter or a fox terrier were being exhibited, or over whiskey and soda in a corner of the smoking-room towards bed-time, or on the arrival of the mail and the newspapers in the morning—rarely was Tyson alone with no others to hear that he was not supposably as a result of Lady Cheam's reticence,

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asked about the mine and the advisability of buying the stock, either as a "flyer" or as an investment.

He strove to evade direct answers. "Oh, the mine's all right now, but you never can tell. It's 'here to-day and gone to-morrow' with a mine." "It's never safe to advise about a mine. I've seen too many propositions of that kind come to nothing." "Look at 'Gin and Ginger!' Look at ever so many of them! I dropped a lot of money in them. Many of them are like the pot of gold at the root of the rainbow: there's nothing in them."

Then apologies and excuses followed, but—Of course there was always an element of risk in a mine, but from all that was said of Sheba it was an uncommonly fine property, and it had demonstrated its value. Of course Tyson's secrecy and unwillingness to "boom" his own property showed a conservative and a very honourable spirit, and that was not like some of the hustlers and rustlers who—confound them!—often brought their swindling schemes to England. But just a whisper! It should go no farther—it was recognized in any case that there were chances—was it too late or too early to buy Sheba?

And then Tyson would smile, and though he knew that this man would communicate with the next man, and that before long the next man would come to him to confirm this man's information, he would let his scruples yield to his good-nature and his faith in the mine, and say something not definite, but sufficient for thanks.

"Remember, I do n't advise—I am not sure—but I do n't think Sheba is going to sell at lower figures this year."

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Favour led to favour, and when Tyson had said that much in the billiard-room the conversation ended with "Thanks, old man, thanks. Your shot. Well done! Poor stuff this Scotch, eh? I got a precious good lot recently—twenty years in bond; soft as velvet, smooth as oil. Let me send you a case."

Or in the kennels: "That's not a bad dog, but I've got a better one. You shall have him if you'll take him."

Or in the smoking-room: "Like that cigar? Not too green for you? Not too hot? The Prince of Seville gave me two thousand of them: no more are to be had for love or money. I've got about a thousand left—I'll send them to you."

Thus Tyson added to the number of his friends by adding to the numbers of stockholders in the Queen of Sheba. He was invited to shootings and fishings, to country houses north and south, from Sutherland to Devon, and on board yachts of many dimensions and degrees of luxuriousness.

Everybody was pleasant to him, and as he recalled his old ideas of patrician society he laughed at the boyish picture he had made of its *hauteur*, its solemnity, its condescension, its aloofness and its detachment. There was nothing stilted or oppressive, no strut of conscious superiority, no excessive formality, in these representatives of it he met at Culvercombe. They neither spoke, nor dressed, nor behaved differently from other people, and never paraded their ancestors or mentioned their pedigrees, or seemed to desire that he should know he belonged to another order or class. The only pompous one among them was an outsider, a little *Malvolio* of a

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city man, who had a foothold through marriage with one of Hilda Horsham's sisters, and had been recently raised to the small, promiscuous honour of knighthood. Even Lady Romer and Hilda could not be charged with pomposity ; they were simply cantankerous ; he could see that they did not like him.

Nor was Tyson the man to endure the condescension or patronage of anybody. Through all his early struggles and poverty he had never asked for charity, but had faced adversity without complaining and without even in the direst distress revealing his necessities. His pride was stubborn, unreasoning and obstructive. So far as character was concerned he had nothing to be ashamed of, but when the conversation at Culvercombe turned from its customary flow of small talk and frivolity into deeper channels, and he found himself at the edge of depths into which he dared not venture, he was swept by a burning wave of chagrin, and forced into a humiliating recognition of deficiency. He had committed to memory long ago the noble and pathetic words of Henry Clay—"My only inheritance was ignorance and indigence"—but they did not comfort him when he sat mute, embarrassed and isolated, listening without clearly understanding.

Sharp as his pain was, the thought of Mary increased its poignance. Had she not been present—had she not dominated all his reflections—he could have borne it ; but it was the gulf his ignorance created, in his imagination, between him and her, that tortured him and renewed his despair.

Notwithstanding her beauty, which was not always conceded, Mary was looked on by her familiars as an academic girl in whom romance and sentiment

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were deficient—a wilful spinster, content with her condition and ungiven to the amatory visions and meditations which should have humanized her at her time of life. Twice, to common knowledge, had suitors approached her. To one she had said, "I like you," and to the other, "I like you very much," but that had ended them. There was no wavering in her brevity, and no whisper of encouragement to wait and persevere, in her manner. A third, who was a painter, weighed the probabilities before plunging, and instead of proposing to her, sent her a picture symbolizing "The Spirit of the North," in which a spectral woman, enthroned amid pinnacles of prismatic ice, with the aurora flashing through wreathing sea fogs above and around her, gazed with cold, hollow, unpitying eyes on the dead bodies and splintered boats and sledges of the hapless adventurers who had dared to violate her secrets and silences. She scornfully repudiated the likeness when her friends gibed her by insisting on it, and when Lady Cheam showed the picture to Tyson and explained its intention, he said, "The picture's all right as a picture, but the fellow that thinks the face is like Miss Leigh's can't see. She's not a little bit like that, in face or anything. Why, she's got the most beautiful smile I ever saw. It comes into her face like a sunbeam out of the sky, and makes her look like an angel. Have n't you noticed it?"

"But she is ice," Lady Cheam persisted.

"Ice melts," said he.

"Mary does n't," said she.

"Then she is n't ice. No, sir! If she were ice her own smile would melt her. It's not like anybody else's smile. I do n't know that it's a smile at all.

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It's something like a spirit that passes over her face and makes it look unearthly."

"You imagine it," she declared, and he changed the subject without changing his mind.

Usually people see only what they are looking for, and of all who were there Lady Cheam was the only one who perceived Tyson's entanglement with her cousin. She did what she could to keep him away from the fate of the other adventurers—to show him the penalties of the over-bold—but he laughed at her, and, not without premonitions of what his folly would end in, indulged himself in the fascinations of Mary's society as often as opportunity offered.

There were many opportunities. She was as free from the fetters of conventional proprieties as Nona herself, and scouted chaperonage as one of the superfluities and superstitions of the dark and unreasoning ages. The downs were always calling, and while the others played golf, or went to Cowes, or drove along the undercliff, or stayed at home, he and she buoyantly and untiringly strode along the cushioned turf of those delightful uplands, over which the clouds marched like gathering hosts and trailed in purple shadows on the sea. On and on they went, in high spirits, and with exhaustless strength and rebounding feet. Fatigue did not touch them, and with the wind from the ends of the world, and the fragrant elixir of sea and land tingling in their veins and nostrils, their corporeity fell from them like a cumbrous garment and they seemed to float in the diminished space between earth and heaven. The sea was far below them, now pale, now vivid, apparently more distant than the sky itself, and yet from their height it seemed that one stride more would plunge them into the

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middle of it. So close upon them pressed the sky that in the illusion an upraised arm could reach it. The hours flew faster than their feet, and they watched the sun go down and saw night steal in like the visible presence of an eternal mother, and gently draw the shadows round the land before she left it to slumber under the vigil of the stars.

After the exhilaration of these walks Tyson drooped and groped in disquieting thought. He reproached himself with fatuity and presumptuousness, and yet he was confident that, impossible as his aspiration might be in the ultimate, he had at least progressed in Mary's friendship : he would cling to that and rejoice in it, if he could have no more.

Nor was he mistaken in his faith in her. She was not a flirt, and may have been more dangerous on that account, for her conduct was animated by a perfect sanity which she regarded as but her own part of a common possession. He had not poured out his story to her in a flood as he had done to Julian, but bit by bit she had learned it from him, receiving it with a sympathy which added to the ordinary charm of her face an exquisite pensiveness and tenderness. It was akin to the spell *Othello* cast on *Desdemona*—akin to the surrender of universal motherhood in the impulse of pity.

“ She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used.”

The resemblance was there, but it was not identical, nor at the time overwhelming.

The state of Mary's heart at this period need not be hidden. She herself had not approached any crisis

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that called for resolute decision or action. She pitied the sorrows of his youth, and admired the way he had made use of his later opportunities. She liked him for his simplicity, his generosity and his delicacy, and there was fellowship between them in the delights they found in the solitudes of hills and skies. She sometimes remembered the incident of the rose, but as the indiscretion had not been repeated she condoned it. She was willing he should be her friend, and he appeared to accept whatever advantages there were in that position with as clear an understanding as she desired that it involved not only privileges but limitations.

She was not the kind of girl who distracts herself with prematrimonial speculations, turning search-lights into the future from the flash of a man's eye, and secretly dramatizing him as a husband from his smile. She was the essence of sincerity, and would have flouted any insinuation that platonism like socialism may theorize better than it realizes, and that natural philosophy is not on the side of those who say because the sky is blue on a calm and sunny day, and the earth unsmoking and uncracked, there are no lightnings in one and no fires in the other. There were combustibles in her nature, but they were so safely stowed away that they needed no danger sign.

It remained a mystery to Tyson why Julian was never mentioned by Mary or the other guests; Lady Cheam was the only one who ever spoke of him, and when, forgetting for the moment the latter's significant hint, he said to Mary, "Julian will be coming home soon," he observed a portentous hardening of her face.

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“Indeed!”

It was in a voice of incuriousness and indifference that she spoke.

“Yes, and I’ll be mighty glad to see him. I feel very grateful to Julian.”

“Indeed!”

“I like him. Just think of it! But for him I should n’t be here now—should n’t know Culvercombe—should n’t know you—should n’t be sitting in the Palace Gardens.”

This was at Winsbury, where the bishop had invited him to spend the day.

The glossy lawn, with a sun-dial in the middle of it, spread before them, and the shadows of yews, cedars, firs and beeches lengthened and darkened in the afternoon light. Behind them was the Palace—a many-windowed, many-gabled, red-roofed, ivied house of greystone. They had just come out of its noiseless and dignified but frugal interior, where the hall clock solemnly reverberated through dim wainscoted galleries and bare lofty rooms, in which hung the portraits of many generations of prelates. Nearly square, and bounded on both sides by high mossy walls flowered with the pink blossoms of valerian, the lawn ended close to the apse of the cathedral, and Tyson’s spirit rather than his eyes dwelt in veneration on the grandeur of the old church, in which age after age had bowed its head and struggled by devotion and renunciation to pluck the thorn from the flesh, and silence the calling of the world. Beyond the wall sloped the red-tiled, sagging roofs of the ancient but well preserved houses which with prim gardens and creeper-clad fronts surrounded the close. The measured beat of the hall clock, the rooks wheel-

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ing and croaking around the spires, buttresses and pinnacles, and the pigeons rustling and cooing at Mary's feet, struck on the quiet without lessening it.

"We do not speak of Julian," said Mary crisply.

"Oh, I know he has been foolish—he told me that," Tyson ventured.

"Foolish! Foolish!" she repeated, with a flash of scorn. "Is that your word for it? Is that how you regard it?"

"I'm sorry for him—I guess he's sorry. Do n't be too hard on him. He's a good fellow. He's not the only one."

The look she shot at him with narrowing eyes pierced him—it was full of disfavour and implacability.

"It's all over now, anyway," he said, very quietly. "There are few lives in which there are no mistakes, and there are no mistakes that ought not to be forgiven."

"There are conditions of forgiveness—repentance, renunciation, restitution, reparation," she replied, in the same impinging voice.

"Yes, I know; but give him a chance. Julian's heart is all right."

"Has he ever spoken of sorrow to you—of remorse or contrition?"

Tyson considered the answer, but floundered when he gave it.

"Men do not take such things as seriously as women do."

Her voice seemed to spring at him. "You believe that, and approve of it?"

"Well, no, not quite. I guess I want to be on the

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side of the angels," he pleaded, with a discouraged smile; "but as a man of the world I want to be fair, that's all."

"Without turning your back on the devil?"

"Without turning my back on a friend."

For a moment both of them smiled at this unintentional ambiguity.

"You'll find it very difficult," she said, and then, "Julian himself told you all?"

"Julian told me that he had been foolish."

"I see. That's *his* word for it."

"Well, is n't that enough? Lady Cheam says he was n't to blame."

Mary's eyes now rounded with amazement.

"Lady Cheam said that! And all that you know is what he told you and she told you! Has nobody else spoken to you?"

"Nobody."

They were sitting on a rustic bench under a gnarled beech which made a dark reef of shade across the vivid, close-cropped greensward.

"Then I must speak, and I am afraid it will spoil your afternoon. I do n't like to talk this way, but I think too much of you to believe that your opinion of Julian will bear the truth about him without changing. You must know the truth. He is despicable—treacherous—dishonourable. Do not trust him—avoid him!"

Each word came slowly and unsparingly.

"Is n't there some mistake? Won't you explain?" he begged, in a low voice. "Remember—repentance—reparation. It's never too late, you know."

His faith in his friend was not to be shaken easily—nobody but Mary could have unsettled it by so few

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words. It was not overthrown yet, and he still clung to possibilities and explanations.

She shook her head, and he saw in her face the luminousness which came in her softer moods.

"What a good man you are!" she exclaimed, unconsciously brushing her sleeve against him and almost pressing his arm, as they crossed the lawn to meet the bishop coming through a postern gate opposite to them. "I am so sorry I have had to do this."

Tyson looked at her gratefully—she had never said so much as that before—never looked so irresistible to him—but he was perplexed and grieved, and wished now more than ever that he could see Julian again.

That afternoon the Rev. Lancelot Leigh, of the Boys' Home in Wakeport, was coming to visit his uncle and his sister at the Palace, and he arrived with superfluous noise and energy a few minutes after Tyson's departure. When he had wrung the bishop's hand and embraced Mary in his impetuous boyish way, he sat down on the lawn with them and ravenously devoted himself to the tea, the jam and the bread and butter which a servant brought.

"Queer thing!" he said. "I met a chap in the station who said he had just come from the Palace."

"Mr. Tyson?" Mary guessed.

Lancelot nodded. "Seems to be a good sort of a fellow. Who is he?"

"An American; a friend of—Ju—Julia's. He is making a long stay at Culvercombe. How does it happen that you know him?"

"Met him just once before," and then the young man, in gasps between his mouthfuls, described the

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episode of the cook-shop in London Road. The bishop smiled approvingly, and Mary laughed.

“That is quite like him,” she said.

“Then you know him well, Mary? You talk as if you did,” her brother remarked.

“Yes, we are great friends. We have had long walks together on the downs.”

“Is he one of the very rich ones? We see lots of them passing through Wakeport. They are all rich—some of them seem to have only two things on their minds: their dollars and their ancestors.”

“Mr. Tyson is not at all like that,” said Mary, with a touch of asperity.

“No; I didn’t imagine that he was; he seemed quite a decent sort. But what I mean is, is he very rich?”

“What a strange question! Why do you ask it?”

“I was considering; that was all.”

Lancelot glanced across the lawn and pursed his mouth.

“A curious thing,” he said by-and-by. “You know that idea of mine of floating homes for the waifs? One of them has been provided for us by an unknown donor who had evidently looked into the idea from every point of view, and liked it—he has provided everything complete, from truck to keelson!”

He waited for the effect on the listeners before he went on. “The money is given with only two conditions: one is that his anonymity is to be respected and guarded with the greatest care—that’s easy, for the whole thing is done through his solicitors.”

“Splendid!” cried Mary.

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“The noblest kind of charity—the charity that glorifies God and not itself. Such a gift is twice a gift,” said the bishop.

“But have n’t you some idea of his identity?” Mary urged. “Can’t you think of somebody you talked to or wrote to about it, who took an interest in your plan?”

“Oh, I’ve talked to everybody about it, written to everybody, and bored everybody, and could n’t interest anybody. They smiled, nodded and thought me a visionary—a nuisance, probably—all, all except the man in the cook-shop. He listened to every word. Could it be he? That is why I asked you that question. Could it be he—your friend, this Mr. Tyson?”

Mary’s face glowed with radiant surmise. “It would be quite like him,” she said, after a pause. “And under the conditions we can never even thank him—we can never even let him know that we know!”

“There are more ways of giving thanks than by words,” murmured the bishop, mildly didactic as he reopened his book. “Of course we do not know yet; we can only infer. But I should not be surprised if it proved to be Mr. Tyson.”

“I am sure it was,” Mary declared, with feminine precipitancy and confidence in intuition.

Lancelot had left them, and with his black serge jacket thrown open, his hands deep in his trouser pockets, and his wide-brimmed hat tilted on his crown, was cogitating and exercising himself with new knots which appeared in the strand of circumstances. He glanced appreciatively at Mary, as she left the bishop reading and crossed the lawn towards

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him. Her dress was of creamy chiffon and lace, all the whiter for a few rosettes, bows and edges of black satin which touched it here and there, without other colour. Frail as her figure was, it had grace as well as lightness, and in the excitement of the moment a delicate pink swept over the usual palleness of her face, which, with dilated, sparkling eyes, was sheltered under the nimbus of the furled gossamer and the yellow roses in her garden hat.

“What does it mean, Mary?” he puzzled her by asking. “I told you there are two conditions in the gift. I mentioned one. You will be still more surprised when you hear the other, which, by the way, I thought uncle need not know of just yet.”

“Go on!” she cried. “What is it? Why are you so serious?”

The gravity of his manner tried her patience, but he looked at her unflinchingly.

“The other condition is that the ship is to be called the *Mary Leigh*,” he announced, with theatrical distinctness and significance.

The colour in her face heightened and coursed like an after-glow from her cheeks to her ears and throat, and she deliberated before she said unconvincingly,

“A coincidence, perhaps. Mine is not an unusual name.”

“It seems queer to me,” he replied, with some severity added to his seriousness.

He knitted his brow in some embarrassment before he directly challenged her: “Look here, Mary, I hope you have n’t been making a fool of yourself!”

This was unendurable, and she appeared to add

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inches to her stature as she withdrew a few spaces and then wheeled away from him in her wrath.

“How dare you, Lancelot! I’ve no desire to imitate you.”

Heaven vanished from her eye, and she turned her back on him and loftily retired into the house.

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Chapter XVIII. A Letter from Nona.

TYSON was often in London in those days, both for pleasure and business. He gave breakfasts and dinners at the new hotel in Pall Mall, and spent his money so ungrudgingly that he was singled out for illimitable civility by attendants of all degrees. When he appeared in the restaurant there was sure to be a good table for him, and the pontifical being in the frock coat, before whom the head waiter and the waiters assembled and passed in awe—the great one of the place, who drifted from table to table with academic reserve and supervisory dignity—made him the object of particular condescension and welcome.

“ Ah, Mr. Tyson, *bon jour*, monsieur. I ’ave something nice for you to-day, ver’ nice, eh ? ”

And with soothing, inspiring solicitude, he would with a fore-finger on his temple and his gaze on the ceiling in supermundane abstraction, prescribe culinary master-pieces of transcendental flavours, and wines as mellow as summer.

Less favoured customers might order as they chose, and fare according to their means and intelligence,

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but in this functionary Tyson found a friend and counsellor who would allow him to have nothing but the superfine ; and as a great artist looks for appreciation in the face of a fascinated connoisseur whose judgment he knows to be sound, so was Tyson's face scanned as the delicate compounds of ambrosian essences and odours were placed before him.

“ Is it not ? Did I tell you ? A—a—a—ah ! ”

Content with Tyson's approbation, this necromancer, this minister of epicurean delights, raised his crustacean eyes to heaven and heaved his fat bosom with an audible sigh expressive of what was both esoteric and beatific.

The restaurant in the evening is like a great crystal pavilion flooded with tempered light, pink roses, and the cool, lace-like verdure of delicate ferns. It is aglow, but without glare ; full of colour, but without gaudiness ; splendid, but chastened. So cunning is the decorative arrangement that no vagary of costume impairs the surrounding perfection, and projected against it complexions are clarified and the unkindnesses of nature in moulding features are assuaged or reduced to the invisible. The tables with their snowy damask and creamy lace, iridescent crystal and polished silver, touch the fancy as fairy islands, and no reasonable being could be surprised if from the knolls and thickets of swelling roses and maidenhair in the centre, with glowing lamps at their base, a train of fairies happened to trip forth and disport themselves to the strains of the hidden music.

Tyson liked it all, but for his guests more than for himself. When they were engaged among themselves the pain at his heart struck again, and through a film of dark he once more saw London Road in the

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whirl of rain and the ooze of mud, and the figure of Mrs. Twiggs creeping down the hotel steps. His sigh was heard above the hum of pleasures that were both glutted and expectant, and at first his guests merely rallied him ; but when they found his abstraction increasing they wondered what the matter was, and hoped to themselves that it did not portend any gathering clouds on those ventures of his to which they had tied themselves.

One night Pewster was dining with some flaunting women and red-faced men at another table, and Tyson saw him whisper to them, prompting them to laugh noisily and turn their heads in his direction.

He seemed not to look or listen, but Pewster raised his voice until Tyson could hear too well fragmentary words which he could easily piece together—“Nothing but a little slavey, I tell you,” and separated by a louder laugh, the comment of one of the women, who impaled him through her lorgnette, “How very, very funny ! The Millionaire and the Maid-of-all-work ! Would n’t that be a catchy heading for an article ! ”

“What’s the matter with the old man ? Seems out of sorts. I hope there’s nothing wrong with the mine,” said one of Tyson’s guests to another, as they departed for their club in Piccadilly.

“He does seem rather queer lately. Perhaps it’s love—or liver. Same thing, you know. Have you asked him ? ”

“Well—er—yes ; but he was quite short about it. I did n’t like his way at all. ‘If you’re nervous about it, sell’—that was all, peevishly, you know.”

“Deuced good dinner.”

“Ripping. He might own the hotel from the way

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they do for him. I wonder what he does for old Lamperti in return. The attentions of that old spider cost something."

"Oh, I suppose old Lam is in the same boat with the rest of us—the golden galleon, you know—Sheba."

"She's carrying a good many passengers. Let me see; Romer's in it, and Lady Romer, Gleg, Sir Walter, old Mercia (I guess he got his shares for nothing), Hilda Horshem, Lady Cheam, Bennie Westwood, Algy Sutton, Percy Tuke, Gertie Fritzroy and—"

"You and I. Let's think of ourselves first of all. If anything happens—"

"Dinners will not cut any ice, as they say out there."

"Things have happened before now."

"And will again. Let us be on the side of Prudence. She's an awfully slow old girl, and not a bit modern. In religion she's a Methodist, in appetite a vegetarian, in dress a frump, and in imagination a suburbanite; but she's always got a balance at the Bank—small but tangible."

"She's not exhilarating."

"No, but she soothes."

"With gruel."

"That's better than water."

"I do n't think so. But let's be serious. Old Pewster was there to-night. Didn't you see him with that newspaper woman, that Mrs. Mannington Freake? Pewster was saying something about Tyson. I'll ask him what he knows when I am in the city to-morrow."

"I thought you loathed Pewster, and would have nothing to do with him."

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“Ah, yes, but this is an emergency.”

“An emergency! Do you think it has come to that?”

“I only want to know where the life-buoys are, and slip one on in time. Golden galleons, my boy, are not so well equipped as modern ships, which carry lighter cargoes.”

“Well, I’d like to know what Pewster says. It would be disgusting if anything happened. Perhaps these big dinners are ominous.”

And when Tyson himself left the hotel the gelatinous Lamperti bowed him out, and two hall porters, belaced and be-frogged like major-generals, sprang aside from other guests to show him with many genuflexions to his carriage.

The news from the mine was not altogether good. Dougherty and Pewster, now working in a common cause, had obtained an injunction against further operations on a section of the property which they had not hitherto claimed. It was not the original mine, but adjacent land—the land which Pewster had conveyed to Julian, and Julian back to him. The “bears” “hammered the stock,” and Tyson and the Senator were compelled to “support” it; that is to say, they had to show their confidence in it by buying more of it as it was offered for sale by other holders. Their policy was agreed on and discussed by frequent cables, but not once had the Senator written to Tyson, excepting brief business letters and telegrams, since his departure from New York. Nona also had been silent, for she as well as her father resented the indifference to them which they inferred from the prolongation of Jim’s stay in England and the uncertainty of his return. When he

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left, it was supposed that he would not be gone more than a month or two, and now it was October, and still he made no promise of coming back.

The Senator held his peace, but brooded on the grievance he found not only in Tyson's callousness to their personal claims on him, but also in the indifference he showed to business.

They were in Washington now, and the old man watched his daughter with an anxious eye to see how far their mutual disappointment affected her. He had seldom considered the potentialities of the relations between her and Tyson, nor had his thoughts ever debated the elusive distinction between what is friendly or brotherly and what is more comprehensive than either, in a man's attitude towards a woman. His sex deprived him of those excursions into the future which a woman so gaily ventures on, taking Time by the forelock and Destiny by a leading-string whenever she sees an eligible pair, and mating them, or otherwise disposing of them, with omnipotent imagination. But he had derived comfort from their attachment, and in a vague way he desired and was prepared to approve a closer bond between them, whenever they were ready for it, as it seemed natural they some day should be.

Nona in Washington was more sedate than she had been at Sheba, but he accounted for that as a result of the compulsion of new surroundings and new restraints, and the educational influence of Mrs. Dennison. Any resentment she had was as tacit as his own, and found utterance only in an occasional sigh.

“Say, Dad, I’m going to write to him and give him all the news,” she announced one day. “How

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shall I do it? Just *au naturel*, or with a few of Mrs. Dennison's flourishes?"

Seating herself at a dainty inlaid desk pushed into the bay window of her pink boudoir in the house they had taken facing Lafayette Square, she rested her round, soft, peach-like cheek in her palm in a quandary. The grace and strength of her figure were visible through her flowing gown, and the light streaming from the window brought out the glory of her golden-russet hair, and tipped the lashes which fringed the lustrous deeps of her brown eyes.

The letter reached Tyson when he was breakfasting at a table which he always chose because from it he could look up and down the river from Westminster to St. Paul's, and feel the past of the ancient city upheaving from the modern surface and silently asserting itself as an inalienable part of the present. He could not mistake the heavy, vertical hand in the address, and though he opened other letters leisurely he seized on this and tore it from the envelope. It was *au naturel*—written as she talked, as if with her voice instead of with a pen.

"Do you remember that story, Jim—the story about the lady and the tiger? I'm it. There are two dens with doors that you can't see through. Behind one of them is a lady, behind the other a cow-girl or a Tom-boy. Which are you going to choose? One you know, the other you don't—one's an old friend, the other a stranger. I guess it will be the old friend, and here she is, just as you left her, just plain Mary Casey! That's what I like to be myself, and I believe it is what I was meant to be for ever and ever.

"I hate frills; they're all Toby frills to me, and

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look ridiculous. Mrs. Dennison makes me tired ; she makes me feel like a performing animal—‘Stand up.’ ‘Sit down.’ ‘Bow to the gentleman.’ ‘Now dance.’ She calls it deportment, and I do it to please father, because he thinks it necessary now that we are in Washington and see so many people. And I can do it pretty well when I want to. The principal thing is not to laugh too much, and take care what you say to people who are not used to you. You can’t laugh good and loud, but you can titter all you’ve a mind to. There are some things you mustn’t talk about at all. Of course I didn’t know that, and I guess I shocked them some at first ; but they had to get over it. You’ve got to be careful how you sit down, too, and how you walk across a room and shake hands. When some of the dudes put out their fingers to me I feel like biting them.”

There was a blot at this point, followed by an expletive shorn of its final letter—“Dam !”

“I know a heap more now than I ever did at Sheba, but you would n’t believe it if you saw me. You’ve got to be as deep as the sea when you’re in society. You can’t be yourself a little bit, or that’s what it amounts to.

“The President is different. He can do anything. He’s as natural as can be. We dined at the White House the other night, and he left all the others after dinner to talk to me. Seemed to cotton to me, and we got along like two old chums. I could be myself with him ; he does n’t put on airs at all. We talked about the West—mines, elk, cattle-raising, hunting and Indians. He knows the West all right—looks like a bronco-buster himself—remembered Chidsey and all of us, and asked about you. Then he got to

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laughing, and got me laughing too—wished he'd had me with the Rough Riders, and said I was the real thing. You should have seen the others looking at us! I didn't know I was so funny, did you? Mrs. Dennison said she was so relieved when it was all over, and that the diplomatic set was quite scandalized. I don't care a darn for the diplomatic set, anyhow, and Mrs. Dennison's an old flirt herself.

"I suppose you've met the King often, but what's an old King compared with the President of eighty million free and united people?

"Have you seen anything of that Englishman? He never showed up again after he went East with you, but we heard of him in Washington. Somebody gave him a visitor's card to the Cosmopolitan Club, but they found out something against him and fired him out when he came to the door one day. I don't know what you could see in him, Jim. I had my suspicions about him all along—he never seemed to ring true to me. But Lordy! How he buncoed you—you always were so simple!

"Oh, Jim, Washington is fine, but it is n't good enough for me. 'Give me liberty, or give me death,' as Patrick Henry, or Henry Patrick, said, or was it Thomas Jefferson? You can't breathe here, it all seems so stuffy—everything's so small and close. I feel somehow as if I were in a cage. I miss the pines, the freedom, the brush, the chapparal, Apaché, Chidsey, the long rides, the patter of the cottonwoods in the cañon, the *mesas*, the pueblo, even the prairie dogs—everything that's out West. The 'boundless universe' is ours out there—it looks like a goblet full of wine that you can both breathe and drink; and I miss you as you used to be before old Glynne came

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and spoiled you—we both miss you, father does and I do; but stay away as long as you've a mind to, though it beats me what you find in an old country like England. We made her sit up once, and father says if they don't take care we'll do it again.

"P. S. My picture is in *Harper's Weekly*, and I send you a copy. It's mine, but it isn't me. It's the lady in the other den that you would n't choose. How's that for a frock? It's imported."

The postscript was in her usual hand, but all the rest of the letter was written in a studied imitation of a laborious schoolgirl's writing.

There was another letter in that morning's post—a letter from Winsbury, in which Mary, writing for the bishop, invited him again to the Palace. They would be very glad to see him, and her brother was eager for an opportunity to renew the acquaintance which she found they had begun under very interesting circumstances at Wakeport. A third letter was from Julian, announcing his return to England by the "St. Louis," due the following day, and begging Tyson to meet him at Southampton Docks.

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Chapter XIX. In which Julian Returns : : : : : :

TYSON was there when the gangway was swung aboard.

“Am I forgiven? Is it forgotten?” Julian asked eagerly. “Tell me, dear boy; they have n’t turned you against me, have they? London is not any more charitable than the rest of the world, but she easily forgets little things, little scandals as well as little people.”

Tyson was grave.

“Let’s be frank, Julian,” he said. “What’s it all about?”

“Then you have heard something! Did n’t Julia explain?”

They had gone from the docks to an inn in the town, and were seated before an open fire in a private sitting-room.

“Lady Cheam makes light of it, and won’t hear a word against you, but—out with it, Julian; you can trust me.”

“Ah, but there are others—what do they say? That cousin of mine? I hear that you and she are very friendly. You ought not to go to her for my character.”

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"Come, Julian, do n't talk like that! I 've asked no questions. I 've waited for you to explain."

Julian gazed into the fire, and watched it through the wreathing smoke of his cigar.

"I remember how you comforted me that night in your den at Sheba," he murmured. "Do you know that serious people like you are seldom epigrammatic?—their feelings are so deep that they submerge any wit they have. 'Though the world began with one woman it need not end with one.' Don't you remember? That was very clever, and very encouraging. You spoke like a man of the world."

He rose and left the room, and while he was in the adjoining chamber he quickly bared his arm and pricked it with a small tube into which he had poured part of the contents of a small bottle. When he returned he compassed Tyson in one of his bewitching smiles, and again sat down in a reverie before the fire. His pallor increased the beauty of his smooth young face, the beauty that was formed of a straight nose and delicate nostrils; eloquent eyes overhung by graceful brows and lashes; a forehead low but broad; rippled hair, and a mouth with the warmth and arched upper lip of refined sensuousness.

He was slow in resuming the conversation, and Tyson watched him curiously, conscious of a change in him, but unable to define it. His voice dragged, and his eyes became introspective.

"Neither priest nor man can stay the long arm of Heredity. Do you remember that portrait in the drawing-room at Culvercombe—the little lady in the farthingale, who has that fetching smile? They say I resemble her. Until she came into the family through marriage the Langdales were moral, God-

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fearing, dull. She was a Fitzneal, and the Langdales have been Fitzneals ever since—devils, though some of them wear the masks of angels.

“Tyson,” he cried with a sudden change of manner and a flush of spasmodic excitement, “you are deceived in me! What you have heard is true. I am a devil. You remember that day I rode over with Miss Plant from Sheba to Fort Navajo? Do you remember when we got back how used up I was? Nobody knew it, but while I was alone in the old pueblo I saw what I thought was a ghost. It was Ethel Dunmail.”

And then in a voice of penitence he poured out a confession of baseness—of treachery to the best of friends, of discovery and of flight to New York with his paramour, of money “taken” from her husband to pay their way, of her husband’s desperation and death in the field. His tears flowed, and he drew himself nearer Tyson, with hands stretched out in supplication, so piteously that he seemed like a child pleading for pardon and consolation.

Tyson glanced at him sharply, and then turned his eyes to the glowing coals and the fluttering intermittent jets that spurted through the dark lumps as they slowly burst into flame and threw flickering shadows on the ceiling and the dull paper of the walls.

“Can you say nothing, Jim? I’m sorry for it, but regrets only embitter the present; they cannot reclaim the past, can they?”

Already he spoke with lessening grief, for with him as with many emotional persons confession was a cleansing process, followed by an exhilarating sense of spiritual and moral rejuvenation.

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"I do n't know about that," Tyson said. "They may save the future at all events."

A long silence followed, while Tyson walked up and down the room and stood at the window abstractedly looking out over the low, sedgy shores of the harbour and the masts and funnels of the many African, American and West Indian liners gathered in the docks. The twilight was creeping up the narrow gulf of Southampton Water that bends its arm at Cowes and leads to the Solent and the sea. Julian's lids were heavy, but he furtively watched him pacing to and fro.

"Ah!" Julian sighed, with a forlorn shake of the head, as if bemoaning an irremediable and a universal calamity. "Why is the world so full of women!" That was an old lament of his.

"She 's a good deal older than you, isn't she? That's what Lady Cheam told me," Tyson said, struggling to make the best of it for his friend.

"No, the same age. If you can condone it, Tyson, it must be because the temptation was so great. She was like a lily, tall and fair and frail—a girl of whom on beholding her one questioned, 'Art thou a woman, or art thou a spirit?' There was something ineffable about her, something so etherealized that when you touched her it was with surprise that touch was possible—that she was real. Her husband was no dunce. Though a soldier, he had read. Why had not the old stories of the oldest passions—the tragedies of Lancelot and Guinevere, of Paolo and Francesca (he must have known them well), opened his eyes to the perils he was exposing us to?"

"Bah!" growled Tyson.

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“Why, Jim, you’re not going back on me, are you? I acknowledge I made a mistake,” the other protested, with an infantile appeal.

“You have n’t seen her since that day at the pueblo?” Tyson continued. “How did she happen to be there?”

“Mrs. Dennison had known her slightly years ago. She invited her there. Yes, yes, I’ve seen her since. She came to New York while I was there after you sailed.”

“So you’re keeping it up, are you? Now, look here, Julian; there’s only one thing to do, and you’ve got to do it. You must marry her—if she’ll have you.”

“My dear boy, how unsophisticated you are! Marry her! What good could that do?”

“You must marry her, and do what you can to retrieve her position and your own. If you want me to do anything for you, that’s my condition. You must marry her, and live abroad. Why don’t you settle out West? I could find something for you to do out there—I’d give you a fresh start. Nobody need ever hear about the past.”

“I thought you’d look at it like a man of the world!” cried Julian petulantly. “You speak like an amateur, Tyson—you would temporize and compromise, instead of facing reality and all its conditions. Marriage is impossible.”

“You owe it to her.”

“Do you think that if he—Gerald—could hear and know—if the dead could speak—he would approve of that—that it would console him, that it would pacify him and reconcile him, to know that we were married? Do you think that he would re-

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gard the legalization of what has been illicit as reparation?"

The variations in Julian's moods and voice were perplexing. He swung from sophistry and defiance to contrition and shame, from flippancy and arrogance to humility and self-surrender. It was in the more earnest voice that he now spoke, as he looked Tyson full in the face and murmured,

"Poor Gerald!"

Tyson weighed his answer, without shaping it to his own satisfaction :

"I think that being a good man, as you say he was, he might—might—that probably he would think it the best thing for you to do."

Again the other disdainfully lifted his shoulders.

"No, no!" he cried vehemently. "It would make him hate us all the more. I must think of him. I find out too late that it is him I love—not her. To him I owe—not her. You want me to be merely respectable—I see your intention—and I wonder at you, Tyson. I thought you knew me; I say again I thought you were a man of the world."

He rose from his chair in peevish indignation, and after pacing the room said, more calmly,

"Marriage under such circumstances is from every rational point of view an aggravation of the wrong; it does no good. You never heard of happiness coming from compromise and coercion, did you?"

Tyson growled. "I'm not thinking of happiness; I'm not thinking of him. I am thinking of what you owe her. What is to become of her? Is she provided for? You did n't leave her stranded in New York, did you?"

There was that in his tone and manner as he spoke

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which prompted Julian to discretion and propitiation as well as to self-defence.

“She is provided for—for the present. I’ve seen to that.”

“She knows what your feelings are?”

“I intend to write.”

“Then you did n’t tell her that you did not wish to see her again—that you would not see her again?”

“It was too painful. Listen, Jim,” he pleaded. “I have a persistent dream—you know what I mean, a dream that repeats itself over and over again without variation. It’s always of Gerald dying in battle. I see him vividly, more vividly than I see you now, and he smiles as he falls. It is always the same, and the daylight does not wash the vision out. It is horrible—it makes me hate her. What a curse imagination can be! As with everything beautiful and worth having in the world, it is a gift of pain as well as pleasure; it recoils like a boomerang.”

His lids were drooping again, and he fell into a doze. During a pause he had slipped unobserved into the adjoining chamber, and repeated the dose of morphia.

In the dim light that remained in the darkening room Tyson watched him sleeping—watched him for a while as one watches the dead: with bated breath and suspended judgment. The fair face was unwontedly pale, and the corners of the eyes were clasped in a web of faint lines which had not been there before. Why was he so sleepy? He could not be well—he was suffering more than he acknowledged—all his perverseness had been assumed. But against his desire Tyson drifted from compassion into suspicion and repugnance, and while he was in that

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state of mind the memory of what Mary Leigh had said to him at Winsbury came back. Still he did not wholly despair, though stronger than his repugnance was a sense of bereavement. He indeed seemed to be watching the dead.

"Come, Julian," he said, when the sleeper awoke, "we must get over to Culvercombe. I've wired Lady Cheam. There's a boat to Cowes at seven."

Though it was then only five o'clock the last red embers of the sun had faded in the folds of grey cloud, and the lamps were twinkling on the ships moored in the harbour and along the quays and piers of the ancient city.

"I suppose there's a house full. No, not to Culvercombe. I shall not be welcome there."

"This is an off week with us," Tyson reassured him; "there are no visitors there now, except me. I believe Lady Wringcliff is coming down later. Lady Cheam told me that you would n't mind her—that you and she are great friends—that she is one of the few who understand you. I have n't met her yet."

Julian brightened at once. "Only Julia and Lady Wringcliff and you! I'll come. But we must make haste. There are a few things I want to get in the town, and by the way, can you lend me a little money—a few pounds, Tyson? I have n't got a penny in the world. Langdale is supposed to make me an allowance, but he's behindhand."

"Certainly," Tyson responded, with less than his old warmth. "There's another question I want to ask you, Julian. Why did n't you consult me before letting Pewster have that document?"

"Was n't it all right? Was it a mistake?" Julian

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inquired, with genuine surprise. "I did n't see any reason for asking you about that. You told me over and over again at Sheba that it was worthless, did n't you? So when the beggar came to me in New York soon after you sailed, I let him have it for what he offered—a good deal more than I paid for it."

Tyson bit his lip and remembered Pewster's taunts on the journey to Crewe. "Yes, that was my fault," he admitted. "I'm not much of a business man. I do n't believe it's worth what he paid you for it, but I wish I'd seen it. He's using it in another law-suit against us."

"He gave me ten thousand dollars for it, and I 'blew' the money in, as you say over there, between the Waldorf and Wall Street. It's wonderful how easy it is to lose money between those two places. Roulette is a better game than Wall Street."

While waiting for the boat they sauntered "Above Bar" and "Below Bar," as the divisions of Southampton's main street are called from the mediæval barrier that separates them, and thrice Julian left Tyson standing outside while he entered three chemists' shops, triplicating the quantity of a prescription he carried in his card-case.

"So Laura Wringcliff is coming down," he said, with restored spirits, when they at last reached the pier. "I wonder if you 'll like her, Jim. She's the most audacious woman in England, and oh, so clever! She will be a surprise to you. No doubt some of your old-fashioned notions of England have suffered a little already—you remember the warning I read you at Sheba? Laura will shatter some more. She is in advance of everything, but I am sure she 'll amuse you, if you do n't take her too seriously."

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Tyson did not warm to the prospect before him, but thought with some pleasure that his lease of Culvercombe would soon be terminable. He strode away to smoke in the bow of the boat, while Julian stretched himself on a sofa in the cabin and hummed himself into a doze with a song :

“Old priest, who mumble worship in your quire—
Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world’s desire,
Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire !
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

“The fire of heaven is on the dusty ways.
The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.
The whole wood-world is one full peal of praise.
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

“The fire of heaven is lord of all things good,
And starve not thou this fire within thy blood,
But follow Vivien thro’ the fiery flood !
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.”

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Chapter XX. Lady Wringcliff and Her Maid : : : : :

THE prodigal returned, to be hugged after the established custom with the open arms that are spread for wastrels, and Lady Cheam's adoration spent itself in caresses and blandishments not of touch alone, but of an enveloping tenderness which gleamed from her eyes and enclosed him in an atmosphere of worship. Shallow and insincere in other things as she was, there could be no doubt about her affection for this brother who from childhood up had been an endless care to her, draining her resources but never exhausting her patience; a source of anxiety, but a transgressor for whom she could always find an apology and a pardon if not an excuse. Her affection for him was beyond reason and beyond equity, beyond all justification, and it atoned in Tyson's sentiment—more in his sentiment than in his judgment—for her frivolity and the other flaws in her character to which his eyes were slowly being opened.

So content were they in each other's society that with various excuses Tyson left them to themselves,

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keeping to his own room on a plea of letters to be written and business to be done, or slipping away without warning for solitary walks on the low, rock-strewn beach under Dunnose Head, or along the downs. But when he was alone his feet often lagged, and though on such occasions he forced his pace and shook himself as if to throw off a burden, a weight still lay upon him, and where there had been the fulness of joy there was now emptiness and unrest. He knew what the matter was; he had known it for a long time—the desire that fears itself, that trembles on the lips and shapes them for speech, and before speech can come, retreats, lest in reaching for more it should lose all.

Lady Wringcliff came down by a late train, and he did not see her until the morning after her arrival. Then he found her on the lawn with Julian, both of them laughing, as, sauntering up and down, she tapped at the grass and lunged at stray flowers with her parasol.

She was straight and thin and tall, with high cheek bones, and narrow greenish eyes languishing under heavy lids. Her lips were full, and burnished with a crimson salve, and her blanched complexion was relieved by touches of rouge. Her mouth drooped at the corners, and her expression was inquisitive and supercilious. Her bolero jacket was cut so meagrely in the back that it made but a narrow yoke across her shoulders; below this her short petticoat revealed with every step the shape of her lithe limbs, and clung to her lean hips. From head to foot, from the curling brim of her hat to her small, high-heeled shoes, she had chosen for colour a pale green like that of a leaf-fed insect, and this with the

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sharp outlines of her almost emaciated figure gave her a resemblance to a grasshopper as, humanized in caricature, it might appear in a Parisian poster.

Only twenty-eight, she had already been two years divorced from Lord Wringcliff under circumstances that the prurient of two hemispheres gloated over and cherished like a droll unexpurgated book for dull moments. Amply provided for by her own fortune, she had chosen to remain single, while the Earl had lost no time in taking to himself as a second wife a girl from New York who was rich and of a family so ancient that no member of it had been known to appear in public without his coat for at least four generations. Unlike Lady Cheam, Laura was not content with the thrill of standing on the brink of the precipice: she liked the plunge, and had taken it on several occasions, without apparent damage. Her reputation could not be impaired, and she laughingly compared it to an old leather bottle, which was seaworthy and would neither bend, break, corrode, nor tarnish.

All in all she was but an exponent of the decadence of her place and time: lawless where the law could not reach her; enthralled in fantastic idleness and bizarre fashions; restless in the pursuit of new and spasmodic sensations: jaded and surfeited, but without repose; and possessed by a frenzy for publicity at all hazards.

Tyson tried to escape them, but Julian hailed him and he was introduced.

Lady Wringcliff regarded him with a gaze that was meant to constrain a recognition by him of her oracular penetration, rather than to inform herself: she half shut her eyes with a brooding look of Oriental

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reserve and subtlety, a look designed to awe, confuse and puzzle; she exposed him to an equally inscrutable smile, and waited for the effect, but the spell failed ignominiously.

"How do you do?" said Tyson gruffly, with a mere jerk of his head and an impulse to pass on.

She blew a coil of rings from a scented cigarette to exhibit the pout she could give her lips as she addressed him.

"We have been talking about the Philistines," she said. "They are an old grievance of Julian's and mine, but do you know, I believe he is going over to the enemy. He is growing serious, and serious people are always banal; they hobble about like cripples, and are never able to stand alone without the crutches they make out of the prosaic axioms which come to them ready-made and save them from the trouble of thinking for themselves. They are always making bargains with themselves or with heaven, and they are constantly mixing the two. Discover their god, and you will find it is bicephalous, its separate heads being Thrift and Prudence. What a very ugly monster indeed! And I believe I've caught Julian nodding to it!"

She pointed a finger at Julian, who promptly demurred. "I never had a god of any kind, and therefore cannot be an apostate."

"What is the matter then? What has lengthened your face and made your eyes so apprehensive? You are sunk in lethargy, like a fish in a poisoned river. You do not rise to any of the spangled flies I've tried to bait you with. You are beclouded in superstition. Why, it is only five months since we parted, and lo! your wit has gone; you sigh more than you

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laugh, and no spark of mine will ignite you. Why do you turn to Mr. Tyson to answer for you?"

This Julian indeed had done. Struggle against it as he would, there was weariness in his glance, and from his face Tyson surmised an opiate. "Perhaps you are not well, old boy," he hinted.

"Illness does not account for dullness," she declared. "Only stupid people grow more stupid when they are ill—theirs is a congenital and progressive disease for which there is no cure. When clever people have pain it sharpens them and stimulates them like wine, and their ruffled nerves play like the strings of a harp in the winds of malady. Are you really out of sorts, Jule?"

"I am out of training, Laura—that's all. Remember, I have not encountered anybody like you for five long months. One has to be very fit to keep pace with you."

She brought out of a little embroidered bag a phial containing some white pellets, and handed one to him.

"Take one: it will do you good. It's a very simple thing—Sir William gave them to me to tone me up after a month in Paris with Hilda Horsham. It was n't Paris, but Hilda, that gave me *ennui*. They are really as harmless as sweets—only a little arsenic and strychnia. Won't you have one, Mr.—Mr. Tyson?"

Julian took one, but Tyson refused. "Then you sometimes find that the winds of malady do not make pleasant music since you seek a remedy?" he ventured.

She pouted again, and a ray of sunshine dusted with gold the crimson ointment on her lips. "I'm

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afraid you do not understand me, Mr. Tyson," she drawled, with a slight contraction of the nostrils, and the curtain dropped over her eyes. "I listen to all the harmonies of the world. Sometimes chamber music pleases me—sometimes I prefer the entire orchestra."

Tyson shuffled his feet and then made a superfluous excuse for leaving them.

As he disappeared down the terraces of the garden Lady Wringcliff flung a grimace after him. "What a depressing person!" she exclaimed. "Is he one of the trophies of your travels, Julian? After all your wandering, could n't you bring back something more interesting than that? What ails you that you associate with such a creature? Julia must get rid of him at once if she and you wish me to stay."

"You'll like him better when you know him, Laura."

"That will be when yesterday comes back and I'm reborn in a cave."

"Oh, Tyson is n't a bad fellow. But where are those spangled flies you spoke about? Throw another one, and I'll try to rise to it."

But he hid a yawn as he spoke, and was much changed from the man she had known before.

Meanwhile Tyson was strolling along the chalk cliffs at the foot of the hill, and musing on the unexpected results of his vicarious housekeeping.

"There ought to be a special annex—a sort of vivarium—for reptiles of that kind," he soliloquized. "She ought to have been mentioned in the lease."

What she and the Hilda Horshams and the Glegs stood for—the mannerisms, the wearisome, hollow artificiality of life, the crave for "smartness," and

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the garish and the abnormal—the strain for the effect of wit where wit was not—he loathed; and yet it seemed that all the society he had seen, all except that at Winsbury, capered to the same tune in the dance of fools and apes in the frantic masquerade.

The fresh morning air from the sea was good after those few minutes with Lady Wringcliff, and he needed its antidote to the mephitic presence which he had just escaped. The slopes above the cliffs were almost as green as ever, and yew, myrtle, laurel and holly in the hedges glossed the winding little lanes and glades—even a few pale roses remained,—though the bare branches of the deciduous trees tossed and creaked above them. Only the oak leaves clung to the boughs, where they rattled like coin in a miser's hand. The sea had lost its variety of colour, and glittered from the horizon to the shore in a brittle, sapphire flood. Among the flints and pebbles and chalk boulders at the foot of the cliffs, barnacled and bearded wreckage and bunches of dark orange seaweed swayed in the lapping tide and filled the air with a pungent aroma. On a reef a little distance out a dismasted and abandoned sloop which had gone ashore in a late gale, lurched from side to side in the breakers, enmeshed in the tangle of fallen rigging, like a thing caught in its own net. It seemed to be alive as it writhed, quivered and groaned, and the water gushed out of the seams in its sides and decks as each wave thundered against it and careened it from beam-end to beam-end. Some children on the shore shouted at it and hurled stones at it, and as Tyson watched them the poor hulk became to him “like a man that is down” and hooted because he is down.

Farther on he reached a cove where a long flight

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of rickety steps led from the cliff to a cluster of fishermen's huts on the beach, with a litter of tarry lobster pots and nets around them. Two men stood up in their rocking boats and hauled in their lines, while the gulls rising and falling screamed and whirled above them.

There was a little bench here at the edge of the cliff on which he often sat, and as he moved towards it he noticed that it was occupied by a young woman dressed in black with that neatness, simplicity and restraint of colour and ornament which uniforms domestic service of the better class in England. She did not see him as he approached, and he paused without a conscious motive at a distance behind her. A book was in her lap, but her eyes were fixed on the billows as with lengthening crests they sprang forward in vibrating lines, like the loosened strings of a bow, and burst wrathfully on the boulders and hissing shingles.

It was her attitude that arrested him, for it had the limpness of despair, the irresistance of an unvoiced sorrow that bends as a reed to an unseen wind.

She plucked at the fingers of her gloves, and shifted her eyes from the sea to the turf at her feet ; she rippled the pages of her book, and looked out to sea again. She was still in the early twenties, and her face was fresh and pretty, though shadowed and drawn by her grief. She quickly and suspiciously lifted it to him with a tightened mouth, when, hearing a sob in a lull of the wind, he came a step nearer to her and his heel grated on a pebble.

It was in his heart to speak to her : it was never possible for him to see distress, however casual or remote it might be, without responding to it with the

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impulse of succour. But as she raised her eyes to him they were at that moment diverted by another and more distant object, towards which he also directed his gaze.

Between the edge of the cliff and the town lies a valley, and the road on its inner slope is as near as carriages can come to the path where the bench is perched on the white precipice. A carriage had just pulled up, and Tyson saw the glitter of the harness and the cockaded coachman and footman sitting rigidly on the box. Then he recognized in the occupants Lady Wringcliff and Julian, and the latter waved his hand and beckoned him, but he in turn signalled a refusal to the invitation.

The girl also recognized them, and with a frightened look first at the carriage and then at Tyson, rose at once and slipped away along the path in the direction of Bonchurch.

Lady Wringcliff's rooms were in the same corridor of the house as his, and in the evening he discovered that the girl he had met in the morning was her ladyship's maid. From time to time he heard the mistress giving orders to her in a languid voice, and the timid, obedient, whispered replies. She was "Morris" to her mistress and the other servants, her surname alone being used, as the English custom is, without any baptismal adjunct. It was a custom which Tyson did not like, for it seemed to disallow one of the simplest dignities of sex, and to withhold something gently human from the relationship that should exist between those who rule and those who serve.

Julian disappeared at the end of dinner, and Tyson went to his own room soon after him. He was not

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sleepy, and sat smoking before an open window and watching the lights of the ships as they glided in a starry procession between the headlands. For a while the house was silent : the dead leaves of the oaks flapped with a metallic click on the branches ; one sapless bough occasionally rubbed another with a rusty creak ; the surf volleyed with rhythmic iteration on the shrieking pebbles.

Then he heard voices in Lady Wringcliff's room across the corridor, the low but rapid murmur of a woman's and the deeper tone of a man's, though the latter was reduced to a whisper.

"Her ladyship is even more indiscreet than I expected her to be," Tyson mused, with a cynical curve of the lips.

He remembered that he wanted his despatch box, which he had left in the library downstairs since morning, and as he went out into the corridor Julian confronted him from the opposite door.

"Ah, Jim!" he exclaimed, with a scarcely perceptible start. "I didn't know that you were in your room. I supposed you were downstairs. Shall we have a game of billiards before we go to bed?"

Tyson refused, without explaining why, and as he crossed the drawing-room to reach the library he found that Lady Wringcliff was still there, not in her own apartment, as he had supposed. She was talking to Lady Cheam from the corner of a couch on which she reclined with dangling feet and with her head half hidden in a bank of rose-silk pillows. She blew a fresh wreath of her cigarette smoke after him, and after arching her brows with affected surprise followed him across the room with the sultry and apathetic eyes of an odalisque.

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“I knew you were fond of making a museum of your house, Julia, but your effigies are usually at least modern. Why this troglodyte ?” she sneered.

Tyson was sneering too—at her and particularly at the full-sized butterfly of diamonds and emeralds which glistened in the chiffon over her heart. But as he opened the despatch box his face became more serious.

* * * * *

“Then it was n’t her ladyship that beast was talking to upstairs,” he reflected. “It was that poor little girl, the maid !”

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Chapter XXI. In a Druidical Circle.

ON the following morning Tyson dressed by candlelight and left the house before the sun had driven the hoar frost from the grass. It was the day of his invitation to Winsbury, and he arrived there before the morning service was over.

As he lingered in the quiet deserted close and looked up to the slender spire, which is the chief glory of the cathedral, his heart soared with it, and he gazed with reverent delight on the grace and elaboration of buttress, niche, canopy, corbel, arch and mullioned window. It scarcely seemed to be an edifice of stone, with foundations in the earth, but rather a high and many-peaked pavilion of the sky which might vanish at any moment with the shifting clouds.

He could hear the high voice of the priest reading the lessons, and the fresh boy voices singing, "O God our help in ages past," and when he stood in the porch he could see Mary under the pulpit, now sitting, now rising and bowing her head. He admired her grey dress, and noticed one white rose gleaming under the folds of her simple hat.

His heart rose and fell: now he was exalted, now

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cast down in humility, as the old emotions of religion sprang up afresh after long dormancy, like a plant that is leafless but alive at the roots. Once planted in the child, such roots die only with the man, and so easily do they revive that even memory is sufficient to bring forth new shoots from the crusted and apparently sterile soil in which they are hidden.

Mary was in the highest spirits that day, and welcomed him with more than usual cordiality—as a friend who though not known long was known well. She did not speak of Culvercombe at all, and when he told her that Julian was back she merely said “Yes,” and hurried on to other topics.

Lancelot’s indiscretion had not rankled in her, and when they all met at luncheon, he, she, the bishop and Tyson, there was much lively talk between them. When he sat down Tyson had some fears as to where it might drift, but he floated along with it buoyantly and never once found himself out of his depth, or crippled by his lack of knowledge. Lancelot was disposed to monopolize it with his hobby—he was a youth of uncontrollable enthusiasm—but Mary laughed him down.

“I know that Mr. Tyson is interested in it,” he protested. “I could see it that night he came to my den in Wakeport. I could see it by the way he went over the figures I showed him. He didn’t yawn as so many people do. You believe in it, don’t you, Mr. Tyson ?” he said, appealing to the guest.

“It seemed to me to be a capital idea,” Tyson replied. “Besides I quite agree with you. The children have the first claim on all of us. You can’t do much for adults—for this generation—except alleviate its misery ; but I wonder what the result would be if

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you gathered in all the destitute children of the slums and gave them all just a fair start in life—how many of them would prove to be totally depraved by nature."

"Not one in ten thousand!" Lancelot cried, with a fervour that was not particular as to vital statistics.

"I don't know about that—that's going rather too far—you've got to reckon with heredity, which 'reaches ghostly hands from graves,' as an American poet says; there's no getting over that—but I believe there are few children who are incorrigibly bad. Most of them fall into evil courses because they do not know any better—because they've no chance, and are driven by circumstance and surroundings. They are the ones I'd like to help."

Then Lancelot told him of the gift which had so closely followed his visit to Wakeport, and he was conscious that all three were looking at him to perceive the effect of the information.

He coughed and feigned surprise. "Is that so? Well, that's good news," he said, fingering the stem of his glass. "That will make a beginning, anyway."

"And the giver insisted that the ship should be called the *Mary Leigh*," Lancelot added, with a full valuation of the picturesqueness of the fact.

"That's natural enough. Why should n't he?" Tyson asked, glancing ingenuously at Mary.

"How preposterous you are, Lancelot!" she cried, the implication being insisted on by her brother's nods in her direction. "Your inferences grow like mushrooms, and are no more substantial. How many *Mary Leighs* are there in the directory?"

Tyson pounced upon this opportunity, and beamed as he said mischievously but with impressive finality, "ONE." But Mary frowned.

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She proposed that Lancelot and he should drive with her to some Druidical stones on a plain to the north of Winsbury, which he had not yet seen, and the arrangement was agreed to, except that Lancelot objected to the carriage and preferred to go on his own wheel and meet them at their destination.

“I’ll be there long before you,” he declared ; but that was a phrase which the energetic and precipitant youth was in the habit of using, in his abundant self-confidence. On this occasion he failed to justify it, and when Mary and Tyson arrived on the scene they were alone.

The plain flattened to the sky and stretched across an uninhabited world : it reminded Tyson of the cattle ranges by its emptiness and desolation, and where a mound or a ridge notched the sky-line it marked the tumulus left by forgotten people in unrecorded ages. Time was when the Romans swarmed here, and the remains of their villas, forts and camps abound ; but it is to prehistoric and pagan days that the great circle of stones belongs. From a distance they look like a group of solemn shapes in monkish dress, engaged in some mysterious rite, and to draw nearer together as a trespasser approaches. They stand on end, most of them, and lean forward and backward, as if ready to prostrate themselves, as some of their fellows have done. Some of them are united by cross pieces from apex to apex. The blasts of wind and sun have smoothed their edges, and the rain has scored their surfaces ; but they still hold the plain in sullen reticence and majestic defiance of all human changes. Yielding no account of themselves, nor of their origin or its purposes, they ply the pigmy spectator at their feet with questions—“Whither ?”

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“Why?” “To what end?”—till he is silenced by the comparison of his own evanescence with their durability.

Neither Tyson nor Mary spoke till he had received the impression which she waited for, and then she repeated to him the conjectures of archæologists as to the period of the sanctuary, for that is what the circle is supposed to have been; it was surmised, she told him, that the slab of blue marble they were resting on had been an altar, and used for sacrifices.

“Always sacrifices! Pagan or Christian, man has never been allowed to breathe without being called on for sacrifices.”

The words were at his tongue’s end, but he thought them instead of speaking them. “Could n’t God do without them? Is n’t it all a mistake to suppose that he desires them or approves of them? Is n’t it a superstition—something that has come down to us as a relic of the times when idols could be propitiated by slaughter?”

There were other thoughts more personal in his mind which clamoured for utterance. He wished to put himself clearly before her on a matter that he accused himself of having concealed, though it was her right to know it, and after the disclosure of that he had something to say that might be perilous to him in the sequence—something that struggled within him and cried “Yes” and “No” with feverish and tormenting vacillation. “Speak,” it cried, and “No—to speak is folly.”

He could not delay the crisis any longer, however, and while it impended he communicated his own suspense to her.

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She never looked more compelling nor more unattractive than she did sitting there on the sacrificial stone in her simple grey dress, with her hair drawn into a knot above her slender neck, and the loose sprays of it glinting in the wind and blowing over her forehead and over her cheeks, as they glowed with the silvery pink of a pearl in the suspense she could not understand.

“I’m afraid I’ve deceived you,” he began abruptly, “and am doing what I promised myself I’d never do—sailing under false colours. There’s something that you ought to know about the trip I made to Wakeport in search of my sister. I told you only part, when I should have told you all.”

“I am sure you told me everything that I had any claim to know.”

She spoke quietly, but with reassurance in her tone.

“No; that might be true of others, but it is not true of you. You are the only one who should know; I don’t care about the rest: they can think what they please, laugh if they please, despise me if they please.”

“I can never believe you fly false colours,” she affirmed.

“Then call it false pride. There’s as much deceit in that as in anything else. It has made an impostor of me. I’ve not been honest with you.”

“What is it?” she asked, with the undisturbed confidence of one who listens leniently to unsupported and incredible accusations.

“You should know what my connections are. They may shock you—they may show you that I am not fit—”

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He checked himself, and a pride that was not false but the prerogative of such an unstained manhood as his, rose in revolt against too much depreciation. "Let her know," an inner voice said, "but do not fling yourself away in the dust of abasement; she will know as you in your heart know, that what you have to tell her calls for pity and not reproach." "Yes," another voice pleaded, "she must know, and when she knows she will pity, but convention binds the world in a net from which no individual can escape without the consent of others; her heart may rise insurgent, but as no man liveth to himself or dieth to himself, she will find that the trammels cannot be broken without consequence to more than herself, and she will not dare to face them."

He watched her anxiously as he told her the story of the workhouse and Mrs. Twiggs, and though before he ended her eyes fell away from him, they were lifted a moment later wet with tears, and eloquent with compassion.

Unworthy of her he might be, but from that moment he rid himself of all concern for the disparagement of the rest of the world.

"You must remember," he said, "that I thought she was dead, and it was only a few weeks before Julian came to Sheba that I had a feeling she was alive. For all that I ought to have made sure; I ought to have come over here sooner myself; then perhaps I might have found her. But there was no getting away from the mine; for years it was only a prospect which might turn out as well as it has done, or might end in nothing but a hole in the ground. I could n't get away. I had staked everything I 'd got in the world on it."

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“Yes, I see,” she said softly, as she slowly nodded her head.

“You’re not ashamed of me?” he asked.

“Ashamed—ashamed?” she repeated.

“Ashamed of such antecedents as these. They do not—degrade me, do they?”

He breathed heavily, and stumbled for the word. “The world is always jealous of the man who rises out of his class, and looks on him as an interloper,” he complained. “How many people are there—even in the class from which he rises—who do not laugh, and not pleasantly either, when they speak of his origin? They hold it up against him—covertly if not openly—as a disgrace instead of an honour. However much he may improve himself, however good his life may be, his name cannot be mentioned if he reaches any social position, except as a nickname. He may have risen from the ranks, and won the Victoria Cross; but when they speak of it they never fail to remind you of what he was—that sticks in their heads more than his valour, and they refer to it apologetically but persistently, as if it were a stain. That’s one of the things I don’t like in England. There’s very little of it in the United States, but you can find it there too.”

“It is not as common as you think,” she said placidly. “It is passing away in England—so many old prejudices are passing away. Men like you make them impossible.”

“How?”

He clutched at her answer.

“By your abilities, and by your character.”

“Then you don’t think any the worse of me for what I have told you?”

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“Of course I do n’t. I think all the more.”

It seemed to him that fetters were falling from him and all the low clouds drifting from the plain.

“Let us look for Lancelot,” she said, as, rising suddenly, she perceived his agitation and awoke to an intuition of something coming that she was not prepared for.

“Not yet, not yet,” he cried. “See where we are sitting.”

“A pagan altar.”

“The stone of sacrifice. Listen.”

“Your cigarette has gone out,” she reminded him, with intention to delay and to keep her self-possession. He threw the cigarette away and she obeyed him.

“Listen for a moment. I must speak—I cannot put it off any longer—it burns me.” He drew closer to her, and appealed to her in a deep, tremulous, urgent voice. “Will you make a sacrifice for me?”

He could see only her profile as she bent her head away from him. “A very great sacrifice?” he repeated, with emphasis, and as she did not answer, the second voice that had whispered before whispered again: “She will pity, but convention binds the world in a net. . . . Her heart may rise insurgent. . . . but the trammels cannot be broken.”

He could see that she trembled, and that her cheeks were flushed. Her placid habit of self-control was strained.

“You know what I want to say?”

“I am afraid I do.”

“Afraid? No, don’t be afraid. I am the one who should be afraid. So much depends on you—I have so much to ask, and so little to hope for, that I have

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every reason to be afraid. But it is not impossible, is it? You know me pretty well. Does manhood count, or is misfortune a brand that lasts for ever? Is a man out of the running because he has had to struggle for bread, and has not all the polish of others who have had greater advantages in youth? Does he disgrace a woman because his birth is humble and his education unfinished—because he trips in Latin and Greek and is shy in a ball-room?"

He struck out impetuously now, and led the way without waiting for her answer. "That's what the world thinks, I know. The conventions of the world are against me, and I cannot argue for myself. I am not worthy of you—I am your inferior in every way. I do not wonder that I have been afraid to tell you of my love: it began on the downs—I loved you at once, and feared as I loved, because I knew how little I could ever deserve you. But you did seem happy with me up there, and sometimes let me forget my—inferiority. I could not believe that you saw the disparity between us as I saw it myself—you were too kind for that."

He lifted her hand, which had been rubbing the rough edge of the stone, and she let it rest for a moment in his. Her eyes were down, but she said with firmness, "You are not inferior. You belittle yourself."

Her face as she turned it to him again wore a pensive smile, but she withdrew her hand.

"No, no," he demurred. "It will be a sacrifice."

"But you do not approve of sacrifice."

"Why do you say that?"

"I could see it in your face when we sat down here and I told you what the stone was used for. I

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could see it as plainly as if you had spoken. Your face is very expressive. I have learned a great deal from it."

"Ah," he sighed; "poor human nature disavows many things until it finds how necessary they are."

He breathed more freely, and his face reflected his increasing confidence.

"I should sell my interest in the mine, and settle in England. After all there 's no place like England for beauty," he resumed, with a steadier pulse. "You know I am well off—not rich as fortunes go in the United States; but I 've plenty. I could satisfy the bishop and Lancelot as to settlements, and after that there would be enough left to buy such a place as Culvercombe and float a small fleet of such ships as your brother wants. What I should do besides would depend on your wishes. I would do anything and everything for you—Mary."

His dreams roved through the balm of endless summers and a griefless world before she checked him.

"You are going too fast."

"You do n't mean that you won't?" he cried.

"I mean that there are others to think of—that is the reason why conventions are conventions."

"The bishop likes me?"

"He likes you—but—"

She was embarrassed, and Tyson faltered again. His ineligibility from the point of view of a don and the head of an Episcopalian diocese loomed up like a precipice in a mist.

"*You* can do anything with the bishop—he won't be difficult," he argued, though he had a vague suspicion that of all classes in England the academic and the ecclesiastical are the most tenacious and the

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most jealous in matters concerning precedence and the stability of rank.

“Uncle is the simplest of men, and the dearest, but—”

“You are not quite sure that he has entirely overcome the prejudices of his class,” Tyson said, anticipating her.

“Even bishops are human, and to be human is—to be often misunderstood and sometimes mistaken,” she replied.

“And Lancelot?” he said, thinking of a possible ally.

“Oh, Lancelot!” she exclaimed, with a sisterly tilt of her nose. “Lancelot thinks he is a democrat, a leveller, a socialist; but doctrines like his are usually more for the benefit of the world at large than for personal application.”

“I’ll see the bishop soon, and I know I can fix Lancelot—see if I don’t. But you—you—you! You have no prejudices! If they do n’t mind, you—”

She had picked up one of his gloves, and drew it slowly over and over again through her palm. He had not dared to touch her except for the moment that he held her hand, but as he watched her stroking the glove the caress duplicated itself and thrilled in his senses. He grasped her hand again, and she did not resist the clasp.

“*You* have no prejudices?” he repeated.

“Yes, I have; but I call them reasons.”

“On my side?”

“You must give me time to find out what they are.”

“Then I am worth considering! There is some hope?”

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The face in the picture of the "Spirit of the North" at Culvercombe was like her after all—all it needed was the smile with which she reassured him.

"You must wait," she said. "I do not promise."

"When may I ask?"

"You must not ask. Wait till I speak."

"You may never speak."

"Then we shall be as we are—friends."

She left him in doubt, but the doubt was no heavier than a cloud that drives across the sun and gathers a golden fringe in passing.

Shadows were gathering, and those of the stone circle seemed to open dark gullies in the plain.

Lancelot had not appeared, and Tyson did not mind that. They drove back to Winsbury through a chain of thatched cottages, every link in which was of garden, orchard, meadow, and hedgerow. When at last they found Lancelot he was calmly smoking his pipe and lost in authority as a self-appointed umpire among some boys who were playing cricket.

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Chapter XXII. In which Tyson is Stunned : : : : : :

TYSON spent the night at the Palace, and the next morning went to London by an early train. He had been warned by Mary that he was not to speak to the bishop, and had no inclination to do otherwise than leave the future to her. It was enough for him that she had listened to him so patiently—that she had given him even the qualified and indecisive encouragement of not “turning him down” summarily, as he had feared she might.

He was of good cheer when he reached town, and drove across Westminster Bridge to his hotel on the Embankment, where he extravagantly kept a suite of rooms, which he seldom occupied.

He always lived in advance of the facts in his life as sanguine temperaments like his will do, and the future smiled and beckoned, more even now than it had done when he had dilated his nostrils and sighed in ecstasy over the idealization of England in his expectant dreams under the glaring blue skies and striped *mesas* of the West. Every flowery vista led to Mary: she was stooping among roses and gathering

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them; or standing among the tall madonna lilies, seeming herself like one of them in fuller bloom and of greater height than the rest, as he had seen her at Culvercombe; or she was gliding along the downs with that soft quick step of hers on the velvet turf—on and on and on, glowing with pleasant excitement and never tiring; or sitting under the yew on the lawn (*their own lawn*) that sloped away from the garden of a Jacobean house all a-glitter in its embayed and mulioned windows (*their house*) and talking earnestly to him (*only him*) with that tranquil, secure, authoritative look (some people called it arrogant, though he did not know that) which came into her face when she was very much interested in anything. His imagination did not stop with these pictures: he clothed her in hues picked from Nature—in the rose and lavender that mantled the East on quiet evenings at sundown, and in the tender blue of the drifts of wild hyacinths that he had seen under the beeches earlier in the year, like reflections of the sky in placid waters, but of all things he preferred the soft, blowy, feathery things, in which she dressed oftenest. She should always have some gowns like the one he particularly remembered—the frothy lace over pink silk.

So wrapped in these dreams was he that he let the morning papers lie unopened on the seat in his compartment of the train, and left them there when he took a cab at Waterloo. The porter at the hotel handed him a bundle of letters and telegrams, but he carelessly threw them on his dressing table, and at once stepped out on to the balcony that opened up and down the river from Battersea to the curve below Blackfriars. The air was chill and clammy and every object appeared as vague as

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shadows in a cloud. A dark saffron fog engulfed the city, and steeped the whole scene in its neutral colour, subduing even the russet sails of the barges and the greens, reds and yellows of their almost submerged hulls. The pinnacles of the Houses of Parliament, the towers of the Abbey, and the dome of St. Paul's—every familiar landmark—was either effaced altogether, or visible in distorted and dislocated fragments.

Tyson did not care—the chill could not reach his heart, and the fog only made an untouched canvas on which his visions could impress themselves without the intrusion of other objects.

He was unconscious of the time he remained there, but his bell rang and a servant appeared at the door to announce Lord Romer. It was noon then—very early for a call, and still leaving his letters and despatches unopened he went downstairs to meet his unexpected visitor, wondering what the occasion could be for his appearance at that hour. He was even more surprised and mystified when he found other callers awaiting him, though they had not yet had an opportunity to announce themselves—among them Gleg and the two men who had gone away discussing him after the dinner party of the previous week.

Lord Romer was a pinkish and faded-looking little man with the air of an elderly beau—quite unimpressive from a distance, but able in the intercourse of closer acquaintance to rise out of the common by the suavity and grace of bearing, the nice adjustment of deference and power, the facility and flexibility which is acquired in long experience at courts, embassies and legations.

“I'll see you in a moment,” said Tyson to the

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others as he nodded and passed them to receive his lordship, who rose from his chair and smiled on him over a voluminous scarf of creamy satin, in which glimmered an enormous pearl—smiled with a smile that was partly apologetic and partly interrogative. The voluminous scarf and the high-waisted frock coat of much fullness across the chest gave him the swelling front of a pouter pigeon.

“This is quite on the impulse of the moment. I trust that it does not inconvenience you in any way?”

And being assured that Tyson was very glad to see him he sat down again without any visible haste to reveal the object of his visit. That there was an object Tyson suspected, but he could not be sure of its nature, though in all probability it had something to do with Sheba. He knew that diplomacy is deliberate, and seldom takes a straight path, except when it is tired, but he could not believe that Lord Romer had honoured him with this visit to enquire about his health and Lady Cheam and Culvercombe, or for the purpose of a discursive commentary on the peculiarities of America and the political and social relations of England and the United States. A commentary of that kind occupied several distracted minutes.

Tyson had long ago given up his attempts to insist on his nationality, and when Lord Romer spoke of Americans to him as “you” he let it go without protest.

“We have given you your laws and all the essential features of your government. All that a child can ever owe to its parents you owe us. And now, speaking of Culvercombe and the country, we are

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teaching you the charms of country life which you, personally, so much appreciate. I understand that you have country clubs everywhere, and that you are building country houses on such a scale of magnificence that before long our Arundels, our Chatsworths, our Welbecks and our Eaton Halls will look paltry."

Tyson acquiesced in monosyllables without adding from his own knowledge or opinions to the conversation. His visitor continued to smile blandly and to talk slowly, as if parleying and waiting for an opportunity. He had an inexplicable feeling that Lord Romer was expectant—that he had come for some information and was undecided as to the tactics by which he might secure it. In the pauses Tyson could see the interrogation grow under the smile in his lordship's face, and was conscious, too, of an effort at penetration competing with his own. Could it be possible that the visit had something to do with Mary?

"Then you have invented a new diplomacy, and practise it through very remarkable men, who have an instinct for it even when they lack what we call training," Lord Romer proceeded. "I had the pleasure of knowing your representative at Teheran many, many years ago. I think he came from Texas or Arkansas—a diamond in the rough. Perhaps he was open to the criticism of being what might be called —ah,—ah—uncouth: indeed if my memory is not at fault that adjective was applied to him—not by me, no, not by me!—more than once. From his conversation one would have taken him for an entirely uneducated man, but his despatches, I assure you, would have done honour by the perfection of their style to

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Edmund Burke. He was an admirable classical scholar, and an authority on constitutional history and law, and—ah—he invariably carried his point in the little controversies between us that were on our part wholly tentative and amiable. We must never lose sight of our kinship and its claims. Yes, I believe you have a great many men like that, especially in the South and West."

Tyson was aware that he was being eyed narrowly in an anticipation of more than the brief replies he made.

"Perhaps your most salient characteristic is *aplombe*. It is very noticeable in your women, and only in a lesser degree among your men. And, if I may do so—if I may—ah—take the liberty parenthetically—I may say that it is one of the qualities I admire in *you*."

"It's one of the last things I'd claim for myself, Lord Romer," Tyson demurred with a shy smile, wishing as he spoke that his interlocutor would come a little nearer to his goal.

"Ah, but—! Now your friend Senator Plant, I wish to express to you my most sincere condolences. He must have been a man of remarkable native genius."

The past tense was lost on Tyson, who answered, "Yes, the Senator's as smart as a steel trap—owes nothing to anybody, except himself. First crossed the plains in a prairie schooner from St. Joe, before the railroad, and rose step by step by his own abilities. Oh, yes, the Senator is nothing less than a genius."

"*Is?*?" repeated Lord Romer, revealing increasing bewilderment.

There was another pause, in which he groped with

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his hands as though feeling his way through darkness.

“ Ah ! ” he gasped, with sudden illumination, “ You have not heard. . . . But surely you have seen the morning papers ? ”

“ The morning papers ? What’s in the morning papers ? ”

Lord Romer’s inability to control his agitation startled Tyson, who now strode over to the news-stand at the other side of the hall.

“ You will find it in *The Times*, but you had better get the Paris edition of the *New York Herald* : it is more fully reported in that,” his lordship called after him.

Tyson opened the paper in the middle and buried his head between the sheets. His other visitors, though apparently talking among themselves, had been closely observing the scene, and when his head reappeared all the colour had gone from his face, and he was shaken between a sob and a groan.

“ Poor devil ! ” murmured Gleg, abandoning his purpose and slipping away. “ There was always something pathetic about him, and I quite liked him. Another fool of time and slave of circumstance ! How many of them there are ! ”

The others remained, and watched Tyson as he dragged himself back to Lord Romer’s side and sat there reading and endeavouring to grasp what he read.

“ PANIC IN WALL STREET ” topped in big headlines a page description—“ STARTLING COLLAPSE IN MINING SECURITIES ” came lower down, “ SENSATIONAL DROP IN SHEBA ” appeared near the bottom.

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It was to this subdivision of the matter that he bent his eyes with his glasses almost touching the print. The veins across his temples quivered like ropes under a strain. He could feel his heart rattling and rising in his throat. The floor was slippery under his feet.

“Again it has been proved,” he read, “that a pyramid built from an inverted base is bound to tumble. All conservative opinion was against the kiting which has characterized the market for the last six months. The day of reckoning was delayed, but it was inevitable. . . .”

The reporter was prolix and prefaced his narrative with wordy approbation of his paper’s foresight and warnings. Why could n’t reporters report instead of airing their opinions? Tyson read through the verbiage. . . . Ah, here in the familiar jargon of “the street” was what he wanted—wanted!—

“Though the whole market suffered, the weakest stock on the list was Sheba Mining, which opening at 57 fell rapidly to 10, where it closed. The strike of the miners following the accident to the smelter and the destructive fire, and that so close on the heels of the Supreme Court’s decision making the injunction procured by Messrs. Dougherty and Pewster permanent, gave the bears every opportunity to do what they pleased with the stock. Strong support appeared early in the raid, but when the sudden death of Senator Plant was rumoured it sagged again, breaking 5 and 6 points between sales. With the confirmation of the rumour of the distinguished statesman’s demise the stock again became badly demoralized.”

Tyson tumbled back in his chair, and lay there

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limp and dazed with a parched mouth and unseeing eyes. Lord Romer fluttered over him with an anxiety that was not wholly selfish.

“A great blow, of course. I had assumed that you knew, and I can assure you—indeed I trust it is unnecessary to do so—that otherwise I should not have ventured to intrude on you so early in the morning. You have, of course, my fullest and deepest sympathy.”

His lordship stammered and shuffled his feet and gently swayed his body in unwonted perturbation.

“Yes—ah—er—my call was quite informal, quite—I merely desired to express my sympathy, but now that I am here—ah—ah—er—er—er—might I, may I—er—inquire—”

Tyson was deep in the paper again: “The Senator appeared to be in his usual health and spirits in the morning, but as he was leaving his house at noon for the Executive Mansion, where he expected to see the President on a matter connected with the irrigation bill, his coachman saw him fall on the steps, and before the man could reach him he had expired.”

Tyson looking up out of mist and confusion, slowly became conscious of his visitor standing over him and twirling a very glossy hat in his grey-gloved hand.

“Er—er, yes, as I was saying, I must be going, but now that I am here may I ask—? Is the stock that you so very kindly recommended to us likely to recover?”

“Recommended?”

Tyson threw back the word with a fierce challenge in his tone and glance.

“Well, not in so many words, but—and it was most kind of you—we gathered—and—er, we had so

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much confidence in you. It comes at a most unfortunate time for us. If you could, now if you could give me some assurance! Lady Romer is in a delicate state of health, and our Irish rents, on which we have always depended—you know what Irish rents are. They are, if you will pardon a vulgarism, like prizes at the top of a greased pole."

"Look here, Lord Romer, neither you nor anybody else bought that stock on my recommendation."

"Eh?" His lordship's body stiffened and his face fell.

"But," said Tyson, "you sha' n't lose if you think that I am in any way responsible."

His lordship's bosom swelled again, and he gave Tyson a mollified bow so pregnant at the hinges that its deference would have flattered the most punctilious of monarchs.

"Very—very—most honourable of you! Precisely what I had every reason to anticipate," he declared, and in a slightly anxious voice, "Then it will recover?"

"You sha' n't lose."

"Thanks, thanks."

He made a motion to go, but lingered for another question. "Of course it is impossible to realize on it immediately. If that could be done it would help us more than I can bring myself to say. Sir William Pontifex thinks it important that Lady Romer should be relieved of all worry, and go south. Really these doctors are the most tyrannical of men nowadays."

Tyson curled his lips, and rose. "Send me the certificate to-day, and you shall have a check at once."

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“Ah, but to sell it at current prices! That is what disturbs me—that would be a grievous sacrifice!”

“I don’t mean that. I’ll give you what you paid for it. Good morning, Lord Romer”—and that gentleman with further apologies on his lips and a succession of bows glided through the door.

A board across the room was reserved for the display of the sailing bulletins of the transatlantic liners, and as Tyson started to consult it his other visitors intercepted him.

“Hello! you here, too!” he cried with a suspicion of their object. “You must wait. Yes, you’re very good to be sorry, but—you must wait.”

They reseated themselves while he read the bulletins. Wednesday’s steamer had gone, and the next one would not sail for three days—not until Saturday. He rushed to the telegraph office, and despatched long cablegrams to Nona and to the mines. Could he do anything, he asked himself bitterly, that would not miscarry and prove to be a mistake? Saturday seemed unbearably far off to him, and what had happened less than a quarter of an hour ago—the revelations of Lord Romer—reverberated through him from a distance, like an explosion that jars and deafens without being seen.

The fog had found its way into the hotel, and every object looked blurred, dematerialized and out of its customary place.

“So sorry, old man! Is there anything in the world we can do for you?” said one of the callers as both of them pressed forward with outstretched hands.

“You’ve not had luncheon yet. Come over to the Carlton with us,” said the other.

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Tyson shook his head ; he was not hungry ; he had too much to do ; they must excuse him.

“Er—er—what are we to do about it?” bleated the first. “I would not speak of it for worlds, but the fact is that I put every penny I could lay my hands on in it simply because I had such confidence in you.”

“I never took a ‘flyer’ in my life before,” said the second, “but when I happened to overhear you say one day at Culvercombe that (I could n’t help hearing you, you know) that Sheba was not going any lower this year I thought that if you who are so reticent could speak like that it must be as safe as the Bank of England.”

“You are deluded as to my liability in the matter, but how many shares have you got?” Tyson demanded sharply.

“Only one hundred.”

“And you?” to the other.

“The same number.”

“And what did you pay for them?”

“Forty. We both bought at the same time.”

“Very well, I’ll protect you from loss. What you paid for them I’ll give you. Anything else? Be quick!”

They exchanged glances, congratulatory and interrogative, before they joined in thanks. “Are we to infer that you will give us forty for them at once?”

“That’s it,” Tyson replied with a spurt of temper. “They are selling at ten, but I’ll give you forty for them so that your confidence in me need not suffer. I like to have the good opinion of fellows like you.”

His sarcasm surprised them for a moment, but

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they reasoned that as he had yielded so much more than they had any right to claim his generosity might go further.

"Er, yes, we paid forty for them, but—er—er—they have been, you know, as high as 57."

"So they have! Perhaps you'd rather keep them till they reach 57 again. I'm going to keep mine."

"You are awfully good, old man," said the spokesman hastily, "but—er—never mind the difference—we'll take forty, thanks, though—er—of course, there has been nothing in it for us."

"Ah, that's so often the way in the stock market. Keep out of it. Good-bye."

He put his hat on, and hurried off to Trafalgar Square to engage his passage and send more telegrams, while they sauntered out of the hotel into the Strand and reviewed their conversation with him.

"We came off better than I expected, eh?"

"Oh, considering the circumstances he could n't have done less. If he had n't spoken so positively at Culvercombe I should n't have touched it. Er, I wonder if he has got anything up his sleeve? That kind of a fellow usually has."

"A bit of a bounder, after all, eh?"

"Quite so. Let's drop in on Pewster. He was very civil when I called the other day and seems always ready to give any information he has."

In a few minutes Tyson returned to the hotel and leaving orders at the office that he was not to be disturbed dropped into a chair and feverishly tore open the letters and telegrams that lay on the table in his sitting-room.

He picked out those from America, and when he

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had glanced at them let them lie in his lap while he stared at the ceiling. They only confirmed what the papers had told him. The mine was in "a bad way," and the Senator was dead—the Senator whom he loved, the gentle affectionate old man who had straightened the path to success for him. That was the blow that hurt, and that fell again and again, thudding within him and booming in his ears like the hoarse murmur of the sea in a hollow cliff—they had been comrades so long and the Senator had always been so kind—like a father, or an elder brother! And Nona, poor Nona, who had been wrapped up in her father, his inseparable companion—she was brave, she was full of resources, she had spirit and courage and strength of will, but alone in this sudden grief, how could she bear it without some one to speak to her, to console her, some one who could either speak, or being silent comprehend? His conscience goaded him, and he upbraided himself unsparingly—he should have been at home now, and ready in the emergency to show his gratitude and give loving service for the love that had been given him. Her voice called to him, and her voice was soft, but the dreary, grey sea was between them,—league beyond league of melancholy ocean moaning and tossing under the whips of the screaming wind.

He ran his finger through the sailings again, but there was nothing for three days, and the three days stretched before him endlessly.

He hardly gave a thought to the loss of money and the consequences of that, except when he remembered Mary and the effect it might have on the promises he had made her. Whence now could come the white fleet of salvage ships, and that Jacobean house

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with its glittering oriels and bays, its many gables and balustraded terraces. He smiled mirthlessly as one smiles at a dream, but was so full of faith in her that he thrust away from him all fear of change in her—all uncertainty as to the constancy of her friendship in the face of adversity. But—ought not all desire in that direction to be resisted? Would not a further pursuit be selfish—to her disadvantage? Was not renunciation the only course that would be just to her and honourable to him? . . . All other griefs dwindled in the great and incomprehensible vacancy that opened around him and benumbed him by its chill and silence and gloom.

When he had written some letters he went out and wandered aimlessly through the dark streets—through Soho towards Oxford Street, and back again through St. Giles and Drury Lane—westward to Westminster, and through the Park to Piccadilly. Under the hoofs and wheels the joints in the wooden pavement spurted mud across the sidewalks; the lamps flared in patches; the horses slipped and stumbled on the greasy surfaces, and the steaming bars of the public houses which abutted even on the precincts of the Houses of Parliament and the Abbey, and reached with their strong blaze the effigies of saints and kings in the niches, overflowed with dram-drinkers—both men and women in noisy argument, or humped sullenly in corners apart, the men hulking and blear-eyed, and the women in the tawdry finery of their occupation or in the crumpled black that goes with the skirts of dingy respectability. Here and there in the tiled and panelled vestibules children waited and played, or curled up in sleep. Shivering newsboys were calling the results of the races. “Win-

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ner!—Winner!—Winner!” That is a familiar cry at all hours in London. The scene was more dismaying than Wakeport, for the contrasts of splendour and squalor were greater. The fog seemed tangible; it could be tasted and smelled; it dripped from eaves, walls, doors and windows like rain before it was churned into the slippery paste of the streets. The whole city looked as if it had risen from the bed of a slimy river. Clocks in towers and steeples chimed the quarters, with a separate stave for each: “Lord, through this hour be thou our guide, so by thy power no foot may slide.”

* * * * *

Tyson returned to the hotel to prepare for an early start to the Isle of Wight in the morning and a farewell to Culvercombe, but he was kept awake by the phantasmagoria of the day, and he groped in the dark to find the truth of things.

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Chapter XXIII. In which there are Gathering Clouds. : : : :

HE reached Culvercombe before one o'clock the next day, and when he arrived the house seemed curiously silent. Brixton and Prawle came out to meet him at the porch and gravely followed him with his luggage upstairs to his rooms in the wing, which on one side gave him a view of the wooded cliff and the sea, and on the other received light and ventilation from an interior court formed by the domestic offices—the pantry, the kitchens, the still-room, the harness room, and the coachman's and the gardener's cottages, behind which the cliff rose in rough-edged vertical layers.

“Lady Cheam?” he inquired.

“Her ladyship's in, sir. Would you like to see her ladyship?”

“No, never mind. Don't disturb her. Mr. Julian?”

“I believe he's in, too, sir. Shall I tell him, sir?”

“No, I wish to be quiet. I shall not come down to luncheon. Bring me a glass of sherry and a biscuit. That's all I want.”

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“Nothing else, sir?”

“Nothing, thank you. You need n’t mind that,” he added, seeing that Prawle proposed to remain and unpack his dressing-bag and portmanteau.

“Very good, sir.”

But the men were slow in going, and as they lingered at the half-opened door, Tyson saw Prawle elbow Brixton back into the room while he himself stood outside. Brixton hastened towards the dressing-table on the pretence of picking up a brush that had slipped to the floor, and then stammered, “Excuse me, sir, but this is bad news, very bad news, aint it, sir?”

“Oh,” said Tyson, “you ’ve seen the papers, have you?”

“Yes, sir; it quite turned my stomach. But for a drop of brandy as Prawle fortanitly ’ad at ’and I should have collapsed quite when I ’eard it. It quite took the ground from under me, I assure you it did, sir.”

Brixton’s face was red, and from his breath it was inferable that the news had just come to him, and that more than one “drop,” which is simply an elastic figure of refined speech in England, had been administered to steady him.

“You felt like that, did you? Well, that’s very kind of you, Brixton,—very. One does n’t always find one’s friends in the places where they are expected when luck is bad, eh? They have a queer way of vanishing, do n’t they? Thank you for feeling as you do.”

Still Brixton did not go.

“I ’ope it aint as bad as the papers say, sir.”

“I ’ve lost the best friend I had in the world.”

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“Ah, that *is* bad! A very pleasant gentleman he was, I’ve ‘eard. Mr. Julian was speaking of him only last night at dinner, and was telling Lady Wringcliff some comical stories about him.”

Tyson glanced at him suspiciously and began to edge him toward the door, but his garrulity flowed on. “Ah, sir, I do feel for you! He must be a loss to you, that he must.”

“One of nature’s noblemen,” Tyson said.

“Was he now! I’ve ‘eard of them, sir, but I never ‘ad the pleasure of being in the service of any of that sort.”

“No,” said Tyson, forced to smile. “Somehow nature’s noblemen do n’t usually keep butlers.”

He had succeeded in getting the old man to the threshold, and there both of them took hold of a handle of the door, Tyson on the inside and Brixton on the outside.

“But it was n’t exactly about ‘im—Senator Plant, I believe ‘is name was—as I wished to speak about. If I may make so free, sir, it was about them shares. It’s pretty hard on us, you can’t deny that, sir, can you now?”

“You!—shares!” repeated Tyson in amazement.

“Yes, sir, we’ve all got a few of them—me, Prawle, the housekeeper, the coachman, her ladyship’s woman and—”

“Fools!—what fools!”

He pushed the door angrily, but Brixton gently prevented him from shutting it.

“ ‘Ow can you blame us, sir? It was like con-ta-gi-on all over the ‘ouse—in the servants’ ‘all as well as upstairs,—low as well as ‘igh. After the bishop had been here her ladyship would n’t allow us to have

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anything on the 'osses any more, and 'ow could we help it, 'earing of it all day long, as it were, until the very rooks in the trees and smaller birds seemed to be saying 'Sheba—Sheba,' not to mention others—'ow could we help it, sir? Why it was like onions all over the 'ouse."

He saw the wavering look in Tyson's face, and excused himself as he took his hand off the door knob. "And if I may take the liberty," he wheedled, "we all 'ad such confidence in you—it was like as if you 'd promised it—quite like that. I says to the house-keeper, 'is word's 'is bond,' I says to her. 'I'd trust 'im with my last penny.'"

Tyson pondered before saying, "And what do you expect me to do?"

"What's fair, sir. I am sure we do n't have to mention it, sir—I leave it to you."

"Very well," Tyson decided. "I'll do the same by you that I have done by some others who are perhaps less deserving. You say you had confidence in me—that's flattering. You can bring all your shares—the housekeeper's, the maid's, Prawle's, the gardener's, everybody's—bring them all up here to me before dinner, and I'll give you the money for them—the money! Yes, cash. I'll go to Ventnor this afternoon and get the money from the bank. Now you can go."

And closing the door on Brixton's gratitude, he said to himself, "They ought n't to suffer anyhow—but who 'd have thought it? I wonder how many more there are? It's been a 'con-ta-gi-on', sure enough. I did n't know that I was so dangerous."

Busy as he was in his preparations for his leave-taking the silence that had struck him on entering the

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house continued to haunt him with premonitions of changes and disturbances in normal conditions. It gave the impression of that hush which precedes a storm—of the world holding its breath and folding its wings in suspense. The sounds from without seemed to come from within. The gurgling of the sea, the twitter of the robins and sparrows, the monotonous scolding of the rooks, the grating of the skid on the wheels of an occasional vehicle slowly descending the steep lane beyond the lodge, and the thud of the screws of the small steamers that ventured close inshore under the cliff, had the effect of being as near and as intimate as the clock in the hall.

Later on, while he was sorting the contents of his despatch box, he heard bickering voices in Lady Wringcliff's rooms, and could distinguish Lady Cheam's and Julian's rising and falling in protest and contradiction while Lady Wringcliff herself now and then intervened with a word and a dry, unfeeling laugh. A girl's voice could also be heard in low, frightened whispers and (this was distinct) a choking sob.

The door across the corridor opened, and the girl came out, weeping now with uncontrollable violence, her sobs echoing all along the passage as she retreated. Her grief was so great that he could not resist inquiry. "What's the matter? What's the matter?" he called after her, but she disappeared down the backstairs without hearing him or heeding him. It was Lady Wringcliff's maid, the girl he had seen on the bench at the edge of the cliffs.

Presently Julian knocked at his door and came in rather sheepishly.

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“Hello!” said Tyson, glancing at him briefly and immediately resuming a letter on which he was engaged, “I’ll see you later, Julian. I’m off on Saturday.”

Julian had the drowsy, worn look—the sunken eyes and the bluish furrows under them—that had come into his face since his return from America. Uninvited he threw himself into a chair. “I wanted to tell you how very sorry we all are,” he said. “Julia is quite upset about it.”

“Yes,” replied Tyson curtly. “The blow is hard; it has stunned me. I feel as I fancy the dead must feel before they know just where they are.”

“I know, I know! I understand. What a spectacle for the amusement of the gods life is! How they laugh at us from their thrones, and what fine sport they have in making dice of such men as we are!”

“Anything new at Culvercombe?” Tyson asked seeing that Julian did not perceive that his presence was inconvenient, and intended to remain.

“Ah—well—er—I’m in hot water again.”

“What’s the matter now?”

Tyson looked at him without indulgence.

“I ought not to have come here when I came back from America. I never for a moment supposed that Laura would still have Morris with her.”

“Morris? What difference does Morris make? That’s the girl who was crying just now, is n’t it?”

Tyson spoke obtusely and with confused rambling thoughts.

“Is n’t she a little beauty? Have n’t you noticed her?” Julian went on, warming with his description. “She is the pure Saxon type that fascinated

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the worldly eye of old Pope Gregory when the captives from England were led before him,—fragrant as honey, pink as roses, softer to the touch than scented oil—creatures especially planned to let men know, without puzzling, what angels are.”

Some of Julian’s familiar vivacity momentarily returned to him. He smiled and delivered his words lightly.

“Good God,” cried Tyson, grasping at last the meaning of what he heard, and shrinking from it. “You don’t mean to tell me that the girl is in trouble through you?”

He turned in his chair and rose in wrath.

“Do n’t be so violent, Jim. I intend to take care of her, though Julia must n’t know that. Julia is in a rage—I am afraid you must have heard her—and Laura—even Laura’s spiteful about it. I dare say she is a little jealous. Laura has always been very fond of me.”

He smiled again pensively and without a touch of remorse. “Yes, I shall look out for her, of course, and I wish that my income would allow me to do more for her than I can in my straitened circumstances. Girls quickly recover from this sort of thing, though there is such a lot of cant about it. I know a fellow who would like her for a model. He is thinking of making a picture of that very scene—Pope Gregory and the English captives.”

Tyson glowered at him with smouldering indignation ready for bursting into flame. He restrained himself to say, “Then this must have begun before you came to America?”

“Just before.”

“You are a scoundrel,” said Tyson, deliberately.

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“I’ve been disappointed in men before this, but never so much as I am disappointed in you.”

Glynne now rose in surprise and consternation and confronted him. He had never imagined that Tyson would quarrel with him. There are people in this world who, conscious of their powers of fascination, believe that their ascendancy over indulgent friends is secure for ever. This was Julian’s attitude towards Tyson.

“I am a man and not a hypocrite,” he declared. “Can’t you be civil, if you cannot be reasonable?”

“You are a devil!” Tyson thundered, moving towards him menacingly. “A devil,” he added, mimicking and transposing one of Julian’s glib phrases, “a devil especially planned to let men know, without puzzling, what devils are.”

“This is my sister’s house, remember,” protested Julian, now white and trembling.

“This is my room—mine! Leave it at once or I’ll fling you out of it.”

Julian made an effort to steady himself as he sauntered through the door, but his lips twitched and loose pulses throbbed and bunched themselves in all his limbs. The air of defiance he attempted failed; it was pitiful, almost ludicrous. His feet dragged along the floor; his body shook; his head sank between his shoulders.

As Tyson watched him retreat he wondered at the miracle that had transformed the debonair and brilliant Julian of six months ago into such a flabby, abject, skulking thing as this, and it did not occur to him that the changes were only on the surface and that the soul had always been the same in its secret desires and unstable passions.

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Chapter XXIV. In which Tyson leaves Culvercombe : : : : :

TYSON rang his bell. "Prawle," he said when the man answered, "I am going away earlier than I thought—I am going for good to-night. Just get these things of mine together as soon as you can. I can't finish packing now. I'm going to Ventnor now, but shall be back in half an hour."

He went to the bank in the deserted little watering place, with its empty shops, lodgings and hotels, and unemployed cabs, and drew sufficient money for his journey and to pay for the stock he had promised to take from the servants, having already sent checks to Lord Romer and the others.

He returned by the path along the chalk cliffs and went up the hill by the old church—one of the earliest and smallest churches in England, a pleasant little red-tiled sanctuary now abandoned and nearly hidden by vines and overhanging trees. It is a stiff climb up the hill between the ivied retaining walls, and farther on near the new St. Boniface, a bench by the roadside invites the climber to pause for breath. Like the old churchyard the new one is embowered

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in trees and flowering plants, and glimpses of the sea appear between the branches of the trees and the banks of laurel, myrtle, yew, cedar and cypress bordering the paths among the carefully-tended graves.

As Tyson rested there the postman came along, and touching his cap offered him some letters in advance of the delivery at the house. That was against the rules of the department, but rules do not always apply to free givers even in England. Thanking the man he took them with him to an alcove seat among the dusky yews that separated the road from the churchyard, and absently turned them over with a vague interest in the postmarks and the addresses. He wondered whether the news had reached Winsbury, and whether Mary Leigh would write to him. He was waiting to hear from her—so much depended on what she said, though his more recent thought of the matter had not reversed his instinctive feeling that with his lessened means he had lost any little eligibility he had possessed as a suitor when his fortune was unimpaired. But there was nothing from her among the letters, and none from America.

One envelope caught him by its size and weight and the emblazoned coat-of-arms on the flap. He could not recognize the hand, but the postmark was that of one of the sub-offices in Mayfair. The letter within had for an address "Park Lane, W.," and was embossed with the same coat-of-arms as the envelope, from which he turned with awakening curiosity to the signature, "Algernon Russell, Secretary."

"Sir," the letter began, "I am desired by Mr. Pewster to inform you that little as you are entitled to any consideration from him in view of the wholly

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unprovoked courtesy displayed by you on an occasion that neither he nor you are likely to have any difficulty in recalling, the dictates of humanity, and a regard for those amenities of life which he can hardly expect you to appreciate induce him to share with you some information that came into his possession less than an hour ago. That his magnanimity—”

Tyson could not go any further without laughing. His laugh was so loud that a teamster on the road stopped cracking his whip and peered through the yew hedge.

—“That his magnanimity will be either misunderstood by you, or if not misunderstood, unappreciated, does not deter him from the course he has generously decided on, and to which he is especially urged in view of the fact that it involves others with whom he sympathizes or against whom he has no grievance and no memory of such insults as those with which you met his friendly advances when you happened to meet him on his way to Langdale Hall as the guest of His Lordship.”

Tyson paused again to muse cynically, “What’s the matter with old Pewster now? He must have swallowed a whole dictionary and a penny book of polite letter-writing.”

Then he went on with the secretary’s letter.

“While at Langdale Hall as Lord Langdale’s guest,” the next paragraph opened, “he observed in the newspapers the advertisement of your solicitors, Messrs. Leathley, Leathley and Leathley, offering a reward for any information concerning your sister, once employed as a maid-of-all-work by a certain Mrs. Twiggs, formerly of Smithwick Terrace, Wake-

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port. You may remember you yourself had told him of that unfortunate girl's unhappy childhood (and your own penury and destitution) at the time when he was consulting engineer of the Sheba mine, to the success of which property he contributed services beyond recompense but without recognition—and he at once became interested in the advertisement and desirous of restoring her to her proper guardian."

A strange change came over Tyson's face now—a sudden darkening—a contraction of the lines—a straining of the eyes.

What was the matter with his eyes? he asked himself anxiously, as he shook his head and rubbed his glasses.

The air seemed full of motes. Was he getting blind? Was it a storm coming up that made the words indistinct? How fast the light was going! He looked at the sky to corroborate his impression, but the sun was shining and the only clouds visible were as white and as luminous as the bosoms of the swans on the pond of the little village in the hollow at the foot of the hill. The compact fringes of the yew made a dark shade, but why did the words lose their coherence and float before him out of their phrases when he was not looking at the letter at all but staring—staring—staring across the graveyard to the sea? He must see an oculist at once. * * * He read the last paragraph again.

"He at once became interested in the advertisement and desirous of restoring her to her proper guardian." Tyson made out that much, but when he came to read the rest it was like reading by torchlight in a wind, and the words crumbled and vanished in tangles of flame and smoke.

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Was he dreaming? Was it day or night? His eyes were half shut as he screwed them over the letter and tore the heart out of its husk.

“At the present time she is at Culvercombe, and Mr. Pewster is gratified in being able to inform you that despite your extraordinary indifference to your responsibilities through so many years, she holds the humble though entirely respectable position of maid to Lady Wringcliff. After leaving the service of Mrs. Twiggs she found employment near London in the service of an elderly widow, a Mrs. Morris, who subsequently adopted her, and put her to school, and she is at present known by the name of that benefactor, whose charitable intervention in a crisis undoubtedly saved her from the perils to which otherwise she would have been inevitably exposed through the callous and inexcusable negligence of her natural protector.”

With the letter crumpled in his hand, Tyson bounded up the hill and through the narrow lanes, up the steps hewn out of the cliffs to a postern gate at the foot of the garden; up the mossy terraces, and across the lawn into the empty entrance hall.

“Morris! — Morris! — Bessie! — Bessie! — Bessie Tyson!” he called like a madman. “Lady Cheam! —Lady Wringcliff! —Brixton!” and again “Bessie! —Bessie, where are you?”

The two ladies appeared in disorder at the head of the great stairway, and stood there, one panic-stricken, the other coolly observant. The servants came running from the rear of the house and from below. They were all aghast, and thought that his misfortunes had made a raving maniac of him. His face and voice were agonized as he advanced to the

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foot of the stairs and stretched out appealing arms to Lady Cheam and Lady Wringcliff.

“Where is she? Where is she?” he cried. “Morris? No, not Morris—that’s not her name! Bessie, my sister—where is she? Let me see her at once.”

They could not understand, and gazed at him in bewilderment.

“I’ve had news, news, amazing news—horrible news!” he rapidly went on.

“I must see her at once. I must see her, Lady Wringcliff! She is my sister—not Bessie Morris, but Bessie Tyson.”

His eyes were dry, but his body heaved in a tumult of sobs. The ladies and the servants too now exchanged glances of comprehension.

Lady Wringcliff’s rouged lips curled, and she lighted one of her cigarettes. Lady Cheam left her, and came down to Tyson in the hall, where he had tottered to a chair. She picked up one of his dangling arms and rubbed his hand.

“No, no! Don’t touch me, Lady Cheam! That devil is your brother. And see that other devil on the stairs!”

He gently took his hand away, and breaking into tears Lady Cheam rejoined her friend, who with a toss of the head, led her upstairs.

“Brixton, Brixton! Where is she—Morris?” he cried to the old butler, who was ordering the other servants out of the hall.

“She’s to start in twenty minutes, sir.”

“What do you mean—to start—where to?”

Brixton vaguely passed his palm over his mouth to hide his embarrassment. “Her boxes are on one of

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the dog-carts, sir, and waiting for her at the stable door."

"She is dismissed?"

"Yes, sir. Lady Wringcliff 'as very strong opinions sometimes and is rather 'arsh with the servants."

"Take her things off the dog-cart, and order the landau for me at once. Do you hear? The landau. Have it at the front door in an hour."

Brixton was more shocked than surprised, for there was no accounting for "these Americans," and as he was retiring Tyson called after him: "She's not in the house?"

"I dare say she'll be back in a minute, sir. She can't have gone far. I saw her go out by the hothouses—just by Chimney Steps—not more than five minutes ago."

Tyson rushed through the front door, across the lawn, and up a laurel-crowned knoll from the top of which there is an extensive view of the cliffs dropping into the sea; the yellow-green shoulders of the downs; the winding road that dips by the rectory and the church and the gates of Culvercombe, and the long reach of the wooded undercliff, which detached from the higher precipices by natural forces ages ago curves and undulates by village, glen and garden to the extreme southwesterly point of the island. Often before had he sat up there in unspeakable content at sundown—sometimes with Mary Leigh—to watch the dwindling lights glow in the evening haze. There was no beauty now of which he was conscious, and the one object for which he searched could not be seen.

He ran down the knoll to the back of the house and round to the hothouses and the kitchen gardens,

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built in tiers on the rough, galleried ledges of the cliff. Here he ascended the steps hewn in the chalk, by which he had seen Mary and the Bishop depart for Wroxhall on that well-remembered morning, which now seemed very far away. Up and up he went until he gained the natural alcove curtained by briars and vines, in which she had rested, appearing in his imagination like a saint in a shrine.

Between the gardens and a meadow there was an abandoned tennis court hedged in by a dense and high growth of holly and laurel. It was weedy, dark and damp and seldom visited, and moles and earth worms had raised mounds and ridges in the once smooth and level turf. A rustic summer-house stood in a corner, the bark on the boughs and the roots out of which it was fashioned hidden under grey, yellow and green lichens. The court was directly under Tyson, and now he could see Julian standing within the summer house and holding Bessie by the hand. They were speaking in whispers and she was wiping her eyes with a wet and crumpled handkerchief.

A few steps down and a narrow path between some holly—steps taken quickly—brought Tyson to an arch of yew, and through that he entered the court and faced them.

Bessie wore her hat and was dressed in dark serge for her departure. Julian was handing her some money—a bank note—and she was hanging her head as he pressed it on her.

“Give that back to him ! give it back !” cried Tyson springing towards them. Julian put his hands in his pockets, and made an effort at nonchalance. The girl looked sulkily at Tyson for a moment and then with a guilty and perplexed face yielded to

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his compulsion and let the note fall to the ground. She shrank in terror before the rage which convulsed him, and flew out through the yew arch screaming. Tyson picked up the note and clutching it in his hand struck Julian in the face with such a blow that he fell backwards against the rotting, intertwined boughs of the summer house and was held there among the splinters and thorns until his assailant dragged him out by the collar and flung him among the weeds on the turf.

“Take it—take it back, you abomination!” Tyson hissed as he ground the bank note into the blanched and scared face which was turned up to him with a mute, bewildered look of appeal.

Julian raised himself on his elbows, and Tyson threatened him again. “Lie there! stay there!” he commanded; “never let me see you again, you cur! nor enter Culvercombe till I am gone.”

“Explain! explain!” gasped Julian. “What is it?”

“She—she—Bessie!”

Tyson’s voice was hoarse, but Julian partly understood. “My God!” he moaned. “How could I know!”

He was bleeding, but Tyson was implacable.

Tyson then hastened back to the house and traced Bessie to the room which adjoined Lady Wringcliff’s chamber. She tried to escape him and fled to a corner, but he stole towards her soothingly with explanation in broken words.

“At last I’ve found you, dear, after such a weary search! Now our troubles are ended,—all this shall be like a dark, unpleasant dream. America’s a good place for getting rid of bad dreams.”

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He took her hand, but she pulled it away; he placed his hand on her shoulder, but she still shrank from him in fear and strangeness.

“I’m going to America the day after to-morrow, and you are coming with me.” She sobbed without answering. “There now—there now!” he coaxed. “Come along, that’s a good girl. Brixton told me all your things were ready, but we must get some new ones—plenty of new ones, if there is time. Come along, dear, come along. I’ve ordered the landau for us.”

She at last let him take her hand, and he led her down into the entrance hall. The landau was at the door, and Lady Wringcliff in her pale costume of grasshopper green was pulling on her gloves preparatory to entering it. She did not appear to be conscious of either him or Bessie, though she bent her head once over her shoulder and coldly stared at them. Brixton was arranging the rugs and cushions, and she moved towards the door and raised her foot to the step. Tyson advanced firmly but with as much politeness as the situation allowed stood in the way.

“I’m sorry,” he murmured, looking at the butler. “The landau was ordered for me, was it not, Brixton?—for me!”

She swept him from head to foot with a freezing glance. “Brixton, take this insolent fellow away.”

“Come, Bessie, get in,” urged Tyson, but Bessie hung back in awe, and he had to use mild force in making her enter the carriage. When she was seated he followed her.

“Brixton, do you hear?—do you intend to obey me? Call the other men? Where is Lady Cheam?”

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Her vindictiveness routed her manners, and Lady Wringcliff attempted to climb into the carriage.

“Can we drop you anywhere, Lady Wringcliff?” Tyson asked with a mock urbanity attained only by splendid resolution. “Probably you are not aware that for the time being this carriage, this house, these servants are mine. I did not intend that it should be known, but you compel me to explain.”

Lady Wringcliff alighted in a frenzy of chagrin, and called again for Lady Cheam.

Tyson raised his hat with perfunctory dignity. “I am sorry to be obliged to take precedence over my guests, but we have barely time to catch the train. Can we drop you anywhere?”

Her ladyship became rigid and with her head high in the air re-entered the hall, while Tyson instructed the coachman.

“To the Old Town station,” he said, and Brixton leaned against the jam of the door to support himself against impending apoplexy.

How Tyson Came Home

Chapter XXV. In which Two Hearts are Wrung : : : : :

HERE were a few minutes to spare when they drove up to the Old Town station, which stands in an amphitheatre of the hills, partly natural and partly quarried. The trip to Southampton by way of Ryde, where the boat meets the train, is not of more than two hours' duration, but Tyson prepared for it as elaborately and with as much bustle as if it had been long and fatiguing. He put Bessie in a corner of a first-class compartment, and gave a shilling to the guard for pasting a "Reserved" label on the window. He tucked her up in his rugs, and sent a porter to the little hotel adjoining the station for sandwiches and fruit, and he bought all the picture papers and magazines that he thought would amuse her. He smiled on her and patted her as he busied himself with her comfort, though smiling was an effort that his heart resisted. She did not respond, except in timid acquiescence and bewilderment. She followed him with her eyes as a shy child observes an ominous stranger; she crouched in her corner like a prisoner, and peeped furtively out of

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the windows as she plucked at the fur of the rugs and the fingers of her gloves. She said she was not hungry and did not care to read. Tyson was conscious of a similar bewilderment and confusion, but he opposed her impassivity with superficial buoyancy, and attempted to communicate it to her by telling her of his anxious search for her, and of his joy in finding her, and of all the pleasant things that now lay before them.

Yes, he was sure she would like America, and he could make her very happy there. His business had not been thriving lately, but though he was not now a rich man there would always be enough for her, and if she cared to do so she might keep house for him, for he had always wished to have a home of his own. Nor should she be lonely ; he knew a lovely girl out there—a very old friend, a very dear friend—who would be sure to like her—the staunchest girl in the world—about her own age—and he tried to tell her something about the mine, the Senator and Nona.

A favourite verse of Tennyson's came into his mind, and he quoted it, taking her hand again as he did so—

“ The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways.”

The little engine tooted and the train began to move towards the tunnel which pierces the heart of the downs from the end of the station yard, and Tyson put his head out of the window and looked up to see for the last time the slopes of the hills, sombre in the afternoon shadows, where he and Mary had often listened as one to the voices of the sea and land. He welcomed the darkness and pri-

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vacy which the tunnel made; it gave him time for reflection, and to fortify the composure which he found so difficult—to hide for a few moments the agony which was in his heart and to regain his nerve. When the little train came out into the daylight at Wroxall he was smiling at her again, and was determined that he would draw her out of her apathy and make her smile too. She was so like a child!

“Once upon a time” he began, “there was a princess in a land in which there were no looking-glasses—not a mirror of any kind, and people could not see themselves, and young people who were beautiful thought they were old and ugly, and old ones only knew by the pains in their joints how old they were.”

She looked at him blankly as he painfully wove his fantasy.

“Now this princess had a dream when she was a child that quite upset her. She dreamed that the sun went down never to rise again, and because she had a little pain somewhere she thought that all her people had been deceiving her about her age and her beauty, and that she was an old, old woman. Whenever she went into the fields or the woods she was so melancholy that the birds stopped chirping and singing, and though the sun was as bright as ever it looked dark to her and all the land seemed foggy. So old did she feel that she hobbled along with a staff to support her—not that she needed it, but because of her fancy.”

Tyson paused in his invention and before proceeding with the fable lifted his dressing bag out of the rack and opened it.

“Now she had a brother in foreign parts who got

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lost in a great wood called the World, and in the midst of it he found in a deserted palace a mirror, which was not at all flattering to him, but was interesting as a curiosity. He thought when he looked at it that it was the portrait of somebody and not his own reflection—it was not good looking enough for that, and he could not understand why the picture was sometimes there and sometimes not. However, he was very good to his sister, and of all the things he picked up in his travels he thought that would please her most.

“At last he found his way home, and was greatly shocked, of course, at the change which had come over the Princess in his absence. ‘I have been to the end of the world,’ he said. ‘Alas! brother,’ she said, ‘I am at the end of the world now, and it is very dark and sad.’ He put the mirror on a table near a window, and soon she saw the birds flying across it and a fountain spraying and leaves dancing, and she had to put her hands to her eyes to shade them from the rays of the sun as they struck the glass. ‘See! there is a picture in it! Oh, what a beautiful girl!’ she cried. ‘Nay, no picture but yourself,’ said the brother, who now understood the secret.

“‘Then I am not at the end of the world?’ said the Princess. ‘No,’ said her brother, ‘at the very beginning.’ She laughed, ‘And what do they call this marvellous glass?’ she asked, unable to take her eyes off it. ‘I do not know, but I should call it Truth,’ her brother replied.”

At this point Tyson whipped his hand-glass out of his bag and held it close to Bessie’s face. She smiled at last, and he stooped down and kissed her, and

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laughed with relief. "There's the princess again—at the very beginning of the world!"

After that Bessie thawed, and when they sat down to dinner in a cozy room of the hotel to which they went in Southampton (they were to sail from that port on Saturday) she answered and asked questions, and though Tyson had many of his own he was very careful in steering them away from others which he knew in his heart were the most difficult to answer.

In the morning he gave her a sum of money that surprised her and sent her out into the High Street to buy the things she needed for the voyage, while he stayed at home to write more letters—to send Lady Cheam's solicitors what was due her for the remainder of the lease of Culvercombe, which now had but a month to run, and to send a long cablegram to Mrs. Dennison and Nona at their address in Washington.

Bessie soon came back with a few trifling bundles in her hands, having spent only a few shillings out of the pounds he had given her. He watched her seriously pencilling down every item, and when she had completed the reckoning she solemnly handed him the memorandum and the change to a farthing.

"Well, you are extravagant! How could those little things cost like that! Why its nine and eleven pence, three farthings!"

She did not see the joke, and looked at him in alarm.

"Just put that ridiculous paper in your pocket, you goose, and come along with me."

And he took her out among the shops again, and bought her a beautiful fur coat with a muff and a boa to match; discussed with her the appropriateness of certain elaborate costumes in the windows

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and sauntered up and down the street while she went within for various mysterious articles which should be, he advised her, of the very best quality and all wool.

The afternoon was still before him and Winsbury less than thirty miles away. He left Bessie sewing and took the train, promising to be back long before dinner-time. He must say "good-bye" to Mary, and he knew now that it must be "good-bye" for ever. His belief was fixed: he had no doubt whatever that duty must prevail with her, and that her duty to the bishop first and to other members of her family after would be paramount and as irresistible as fetters of steel.

The afternoon service was on when he arrived at the Cathedral, and one of the canons was reading in a sepulchral voice the first lesson. The air was cold and the light dim, and not more than half a dozen persons were present in addition to the clergy and the vergers. The reader's voice rumbled harshly from the choir to the clerestory, and sounded as if invisible mockers were repeating it from behind the grey pillars and the high arched roof. The joyless words fitted Tyson's mood and echoed heavily in his ears with responsive despondency.

"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever."

"The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteneth to his place where he arose."

"The wind goeth towards the south, and turneth about towards the north: it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his currents."

"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not

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full ; unto the place whence the rivers come thither they return again.

“All things are full of labour ; man cannot utter it ; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

“That which is crooked cannot be made straight : and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.”

Mary saw him as she turned into the transept, outside of which there was a private entrance to the palace garden. Her face was grave and sweet, and when they clasped hands the pressure of hers thrilled him, and she let it remain in his instead of immediately withdrawing it.

“Come and have some tea,” she said, passing through the gate. “Nobody is at home. Uncle has gone to Exeter, and Lancelot has returned to Wakeport with a very high opinion of you. You got my telegram ? I sent it the moment I read that dreadful news in the papers.”

She led him into one of the wainscotted rooms, where a leafless vine was tapping the diamond panes in the leaded and mullioned windows, and she rang for the tea. The telegram had not reached him.

“It does not matter,” she said ; “such things are mere matters of form—too much so for friends—are n’t they ? The more we know each other the less necessary they are. You—you did n’t need a telegram to tell you that any sorrow of yours must be a sorrow of mine, did you ?”

“I was sure of that,” he replied gratefully, and she eagerly asked him many questions about the Senator and Nona without once referring to the mine, though at length he spoke of it.

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“It makes a comparatively poor man of me, but I do n’t really know how I stand yet, nor how we shall come out.”

“That can be borne—I am not thinking of that. You really had too much money, and riches in excess of moderate needs are seldom a blessing.”

He smiled wistfully as he recalled all his plans to serve her in serving humanity. “I guess I could have made use of all I had without wasting a penny of it.”

He was not at all surprised that his losses appeared to have made no change so far as she was concerned in their relationship.

“I suppose you are going back to America at once?” she inquired.

“To-morrow. I came to say ‘good-bye.’”

“And when are we to see you again? When Americans once know England they return with the summer like the birds, year after year.”

“Ah! I wish I had n’t to go at all. I’d like to wait and wait—I’d never get tired of it—until you spoke as you said you might—some day.”

He drew his chair a little nearer to her and reached for her hand. A moment later a consciousness of duplicity not only restrained him from any further advance but relegated him to despair. She knew of his reverses and of the death of Senator Plant, but nothing of the recent happenings at Culvercombe, and when she learned of them, as she would be sure to do sooner or later even if he did not inform her, what hope could there be for him then?—what remnant of justification for his suit? In coming to Winsbury it had been his intention to take leave of one who could never be more than a friend now and probably for the future a friend only accessible in the memory of

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a dream. However constant she might be she was lost to him for ever, and any attempt to recover her would be both fatuous and selfish.

“No, I could not approve of that,—of you staying” she said, replying to his last words with a decided movement of her head. “I like your earnestness, your strenuousness and your common sense. You have plenty of use for them now.”

He looked at his watch and rose.

“I must be back in Southampton by six o’clock. Somebody waiting for me there sails with me tomorrow—my sister.”

“You have found her! and at this time! How good God is! Tell me about her—tell me all about her!”

“Not now, not now.”

He made for the hall with a scalding pain in his heart. “Yes, I found her at Culvercombe, poor child—at Culvercombe—yes, under horrible conditions—wronged—ruined!”

“But do n’t leave me like this,” she complained as his face whitened. “I surely ought to know! You surely have confidence in me.”

She caught him by the arm and he took both her wrists and drew her close to him and encompassed her in one look of hopelessness and love. He could feel her warm breath on his cheek, and he could have kissed her without offending her—she almost lifted her mouth to his—but he controlled himself, and turned away.

“I cannot tell you now,” he repeated. I cannot tell you more than that. You will hear—you must hear—and you will be sorry.”

She offered to send him to the station in a carriage,

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but he chose to walk, and waving his hand to her he disappeared through the postern gate leading into the silent and deserted close, while the hollow voice of the old priest reverberated the lesson of the day in his ears :

“That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered.”

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Chapter XXVI. Leaves the Reader to Decide Whether this Story Ends Happily or not : : : :

ONA had the spirit of a general in battle who cannot allow grief for the fallen to paralyze him but must push on to save what remains from further disaster. She buried her dead on a hill, whence the Potomac is seen sweeping along the Virginian shore to the bay, and then she plunged into action. The Senator had sold none of his stock, and the majority of the shares still belonged to his estate, to her and to Tyson. She was determined that the control of the property should not pass into other hands, and was confident of victory in the end. All of the real stock that had "come out," in the phrase of "the Street," was that of the liquidating and panic-stricken minority; the rest of the selling had come from the "shorts," who, as perhaps few readers need to be told, sell what they do not own and by a system of credit delay the delivery until the price has fallen to a lower figure, and they are able to fulfil their obligations at a profit. That is their plan but it is precarious and sometimes fails. Instead of fall-

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ing the stock may rise, and in that event they are obliged to make their contracts good by purchasing, or "covering" at higher prices than those at which they sold. When defeated they are, in the slang of the market, "squeezed."

This will explain an exclamation of Nona's as she started out for Wall Street from the Waldorf in a coupé. She was alone, for Mrs. Dennison was unwell, and Nona wanted neither woman nor man to escort her, aid her or advise her. She knew "the Street" and its methods well—better than most of the little "lambs" in breeches who assemble morning after morning in the brokers' offices until they have learned how quickly shearing can be done.

"Sixty-five B Wall Street," she told the driver, and then she said to herself inexorably, "I do n't care who they are. I 'll squeeze the life out of them—see if I do n't."

Her mourning became her. Her face under her veil was paler than it had been, and all the tan and freckles and dimples had vanished from it. She looked out wearily on the noisy, confused traffic of the city, and was conscious that the clang of the car bells and the rattle of the wheels produced an unfamiliar irritation of the nerves. A sob was caught as it arose, and she resolutely closed her lips before it could escape—she diverted herself from introspection by giving a fresh tilt to her hat and sundry deft touches to the pins.

The panic was over, but as the doors of the Exchange swung open a roar like that of a distant avalanche came from the floor,—"the Board" as they call the actual market place. That is always boisterous and tumultuous, but Wall Street even in the

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whirl of a panic is one of the most stoical and least theatrical places in the world. The messengers dart about more swiftly than usual, and the telegraph boys are busier. There are more people in the offices, but they gossip less and tell fewer stories ; they crowd about the "tickers" and stoop to anticipate the numerals before the clicking little wheels can print them on the tape. Gloom is in many faces and grunts of dissatisfaction can be heard as this or that stock is "hammered" and "hammered" again until its foundations shake. A man who has a check in his pocket makes haste to have it certified, and now and then a customer is called into the private office to meet a demand for more margin ; the telephone bells allow the clerks no peace. But while fortunes change hands or vanish altogether as in a day of wrath and judgment the victims control their emotions in a marvellous way — they may hunch their shoulders and depart suddenly with a curse, but they seldom, if ever, do anything violently emotional or melodramatic, and never stagger out, groaning "My God ! I am ruined !" The coolness and taciturnity with which a panic is borne is one of the most surprising things a stranger may see in a long experience of human nature. "They take their medicine, like good boys," is the flippant phrase of "the Street" for recognizing their fortitude.

When Nona was admitted to the private office of the President of the Town and Country Bank he smiled at her and bowed her into a seat, wondering as he did so how she had taken *her* medicine, the bitterness of which he knew. They were old friends, and he had been to Washington for her father's funeral. Her composure amazed him.

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“What can I do for you, Nona?” he asked.

“I want to borrow some money—at once.”

“How much?”

“About five hundred thousand dollars to begin with—perhaps more later.”

The president tapped on his desk with a pencil and closed one eye to concentrate the other in an intensified inquiry. “Money is dear,” he said. “We loaned some at forty per cent yesterday.”

“What are you charging to-day?”

“Well, that depends on who wants it, and what the collateral is.”

“I am the one who wants it, and the collateral is that land in Denver. You know it. That’s good enough, is n’t it?”

Two railways were bidding against each other for the land she spoke of, which had been transferred to her by her father not many months ago.

The president pondered—he was a spruce, good-looking man of not more than forty, with a high, clear complexion, and drifts of premature grey in the dark hair over his ears. His manner was paternally protective. “Look here, Nona! What are you up to?”

“I’m going to squeeze them—squeeze them hard!”

“I thought so—but had n’t we better think about it? Would n’t it be wiser to compromise instead of forcing a further contest?”

“Compromise! Compromise!” she said indignant. “What do you mean?”

“Well, I happen to know that Dougherty is eager to buy control of Sheba, and would be willing to pay you ten points higher than the market price for your

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shares and Tyson's. What do you want to do with the mine now? It is too great a responsibility."

"I guess Jim and I can bear it between us."

"Mr. Tyson is no match for Dougherty and Pewster. He's a nice fellow, but he is not in it with gentlemen of that kind."

"Jim's too good-natured, too high-minded for frauds like them, that's true enough—but he's not so easy when he's roused, let me tell you! He has n't many kicks in him, but they're good ones when he makes up his mind."

"A compromise would end litigation. It would leave you free to enjoy yourself, and to live East."

"But I do n't want to live East. Is n't the West good enough for me? I have n't been quite happy since I left it."

"Well, had n't you better wait till Jim arrives? He and you are joint executors, I understand."

"Wait? No—most certainly not. I want to have things fixed before he gets back so as to surprise him, and I'm going to begin right now—just as soon as you let me have that money."

"Are you sure you know who has been selling short?"

She glanced at him impatiently. "Who would dare to sell it short but Dougherty and Pewster? I've traced the selling—it's theirs of course. They know that father got tied up in that Mexican syndicate, and they thought that with his death and the strike, and the accident, and Jim in Europe, that I'd be obliged to unload. They thought they'd freeze us out. Now, I'll show them! I believe father would have been alive now but for them."

"Nona, you need rest and quiet. Why do n't you

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go with Mrs. Dennison to Lakewood for a few weeks?"

"What I want is revenge, and I'll have it."

She rapped the desk with her knuckles.

"I am afraid of you, Nona, when those orange spots come into your eyes. 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.'

"That's so, but John Hay knew what that meant. He got that all right in one of his poems:

"'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.
But hath He no instrument here?'"

She clenched her strong hands again, and her lifted veil showed her tightened lips. In her eyes were the colours that film the sea in the sultry hushes before a storm. The president looked at her earnestly, and was diverted for a moment from business considerations to a conscious observation of her beauty and a perception of vague contingencies essentially personal in their nature.

"The collateral is ample?" she inquired.

The president sighed. "I think that will be all right."

"Then let me use your telephone. I want to get hold of Rossiter Sharpe."

This was the name of one of the cleverest operators in Wall Street.

"He's going to be the man at the gun," she explained. "I can't stay here. I've got to go out to Sheba to settle that strike, but you watch out! Before the week is over you'll see some fireworks, sure."

The president escorted her to the coupé and lingered wistfully at the open window when she was seated—

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he was sorry to see her go, and was sacrificing precious time in attending her—but there was no coquetry in her and she did not respond to his smile. The president sighed again as she drove away.

She started for the West that night, and settled the strike so quickly that all who heard of her achievement began to think that it would be a good idea to always have women on Boards of Arbitration in labour difficulties. Then she hastened back East, and arrived in New York the evening before the day on which Tyson's ship was due.

The ship was anchored at Quarantine when Tyson came on deck in the wintry dawn, and the great cluster of high buildings near the Battery, with their pinnacles, towers and gilded cupolas loomed phantom-like in the rosy haze. Time was when it was easy to get permission to go on board the incoming steamers by the doctor's boat, or the customs' boat, but that privilege has been cancelled and an inexorable rule against it is relaxed only when visiting royalty, ambassadors or people of high official position arrive. Nevertheless as the doctor's boat puffed out from the shore that morning Tyson perceived two ladies in her pilot-house, and as she came alongside the big ship he recognized Nona and Mrs. Dennison. Contrary to other rules a ladder with wide steps and a rail was lowered for them, and the first thing Mrs. Dennison exclaimed when they reached the promenade deck was, "Jim, this girl will be my death yet! She's had me up all night, and tenting on an alkali desert, or chasing Indians among the lava beds is a life of ease and luxury in comparison with the life she leads me."

Nona petted her. "Never mind, honey, never

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mind. We 'll all be going back to Sheba soon, and the life of a chaperon is n't hard there. You can just be an allegory of the Law, like a picture in one of the court houses—just look as severe and as superior as you like—but say nothing and do nothing."

Her manner to Tyson was warm, and she blushed as he held her by both wrists. She was more sedate and maturer than when he had parted from her; a woman instead of a hoyden.

"We 've got them, Jim!" she informed him triumphantly.

"Got them?"

"Cornered! Sheba closed at forty last night."

"The Strike?"

"All over. I settled it on a profit-sharing basis."

"The accident to the smelter?"

"Does n't cost us a cent. The Allis-Chalmers people are repairing it at their own expense."

"The injunction?"

"Father appealed that."

Tyson could not speak; he could only gaze at her through misty, swimming eyes with great wonder and admiration.

"Yes," Mrs. Dennison commented, "that's the kind of girl she is! Why, if she were a man, and unhampered by the tyranny of her petticoats she'd be President and Cabinet too and still sigh for other worlds to conquer."

"Alexander and Cæsar wore petticoats," Nona reminded her.

"Yes, and they were shockingly short," her companion replied. "Any way I do wish you'd let a poor old woman have her natural sleep!"

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Bessie had not appeared, and when Mrs. Dennison inquired for her Tyson whispered to her. He had sent her a private cablegram in addition to that in which he had informed Nona that he was not returning alone, and Mrs. Dennison understood. She went with Nona to Bessie's stateroom, and brought her to Tyson in the saloon, where they all sat down to breakfast.

"Somehow you do n't seem like a stranger," Nona said to Bessie. "It's just as if you'd been away awhile with Jim and we'd come to welcome you home."

Bessie smiled timidly and looked at her brother with the docile, appealing, questioning eyes of a dumb animal desiring instruction.

* * * * * * *

Two years later Nona and Mrs. Dennison were living together in the great house at Sheba, and the mine was prospering, though a net of litigation still hung over it. Pewster had transferred his attention to South Africa, and Dougherty had retired to the splendours of a marble palace facing the Park on upper Fifth Avenue. Tyson had built a lodge for himself on a site from which all signs of the mine—the mills, the chimneys and derricks—were hidden. He had chosen that spot, because looking from it was like turning one's back on the inhabited world and retiring to the solitudes of nature. The stunted sagebrush speckled the yellow plain until it met the curling, surf-like fringe of the porous, crumpled, steely-grey lava, and the Mountain of To-morrow clove the rarified air with its pyramid, which amethystine by day deepened as the sun descended into sapphire, and changed again in the last rays to a purple shot

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with gold. Bessie who had come out of her trouble childless lived with him, and was the sole mistress of his house. In all that duty and affection called for she was unfailing, but his many inventions to charm her out of her gloom resulted in nothing more than a pathetic and evanescent reflection of his intention, and her cheerfulness lasted only as long as her conscious effort to please him.

He found her weeping in her bedroom one evening, and when he asked the reason she sobbed and flung herself on the bed.

“He’s dead—he’s dead!” she moaned. “He’s dead, and I love him! I’ve always loved him!”

She pointed to an English newspaper of recent date, and though he instinctively knew what was in it he searched its columns till he fell on a brief notice of the death of Julian Glynne at an obscure little hotel in Paris.

Tyson had heard from Mary soon after his return to New York; her letter was kind, but restrained—a letter that without a word of farewell seemed to have in full view an impassable situation from which there could be no advance. That she had heard of what took place at Culvercombe he could not doubt, for an anonymous person had sent him, and Mrs. Dennison, and even Nona, copies of an issue of “The Hornet’s Nest”—the paper to which Pewster’s friend, Mrs. Mannington Freake, was a contributor—containing a marked paragraph headed “The Millionaire and the Maid of all Work.” He surmised that the sender in her malice had not overlooked in the gratuitous distribution anybody, friend or enemy, who might be stung or amused by that paragraph. The situation was not less irrevocable

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or less insuperable to his own understanding than it was in the interpretation he extracted by intuition from Mary's words ; it was not what they said but what was left unsaid that convinced him.

When he wrote his answer it was brief and formal and made no appeal to either sentiment or passion—to the past or to the future, though between each of his words visions appeared of some dear scene or incident in their companionship—the jewelled hilt in the sky ; the downs in the waning light, with the stars fluttering like white anemones in fields of hyacinth and pink roses, and the avenue of shadow across the quiet lawn of the Palace garden. The ecstasy of that afternoon on the haunted plain beyond Winsbury when his heart had declared itself throbbed in his veins again.

Before he sealed his letter another memory recalled to him how he had picked up that ancient book which Mary had been reading in the drawing-room at Culvercombe, and how he had put it down without understanding it. It seemed to be in his hands again—he could feel its substance—and he was again shutting it with a sigh and closing forever the old silver clasp. In another mood it seemed to him that Mary had never been of this earth, that she was less than a woman and more than a woman.

Bessie pined under the news from England and Nona nursed her through a long illness. It was to Nona that Tyson gave credit for her recovery, though a professional nurse from Denver had not been altogether superseded by Nona's ministrations. Tyson watched his sister growing stronger, and at the end of her convalescence she was more animated than he had ever seen her before.

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“It’s all Nona,” she declared to him. “I can’t be miserable when she’s around. And Oh, Jim,” Bessie added in a whisper, “she worships you. Do n’t you—do n’t you love her?”

Tyson parried her, and all he said was, “It makes me happy to see you girls getting along so well together.” But the answer came indirectly some months later.

It was spring, and Tyson and Nona had been spending the afternoon at Fort Navajo. When they returned at sundown Nona entered the drawing-room of the great house, and remained standing and swishing her riding skirt with her whip after she had given a military salute to Mrs. Dennison, who was sewing. Her face was brown and jocund again, and a flame danced in her eyes. His hair had grown grey, and the hard work and care he had given to the mine had left a record of wrinkles.

“General,” she said—she often called Mrs. Dennison “general”—“General, you are to be retired on a special pension and with a vote of thanks. You’ve sometimes been a martinet, but you’ve always tempered justice with mercy, and worked for the good of the service. You’re a good old general.”

The old lady looked at her inquiringly.

“What nonsense is it now, Nona?”

“Nonsense! I’m in dead earnest. Jim takes command of this garrison, that’s all. Salute him! I’ve done it already.”

“Oh, I’m not one bit surprised; it’s exactly what I expected,” Mrs. Dennison declared with pride in her imaginary prescience, as Tyson kissed her forehead.

She kissed Nona, and then gathering her trifles together left them alone. Nona followed him to the

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low casement window and resting her head against his shoulder looked out with him over the plain and the old pueblo to Manaña shining beyond in its gold and purple.

"We can go and live in England if you'd like to, Jim," she said.

He shook his head. "No, no, this will do for me. Is n't it beautiful to-night?"

"Why, I guess you love it as much as I do after all."

"It's home to me."

"That's right, Jim. That's the way I like to hear you talk."

And Nona went to a crystal bowl on a small table and took from it an apple, which she munched in supreme content.

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